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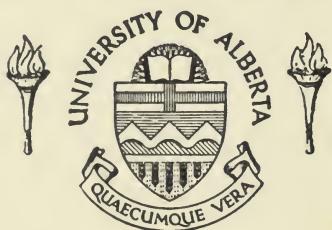
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Thomas, L.G.

The ranching period in southern
Alberta.

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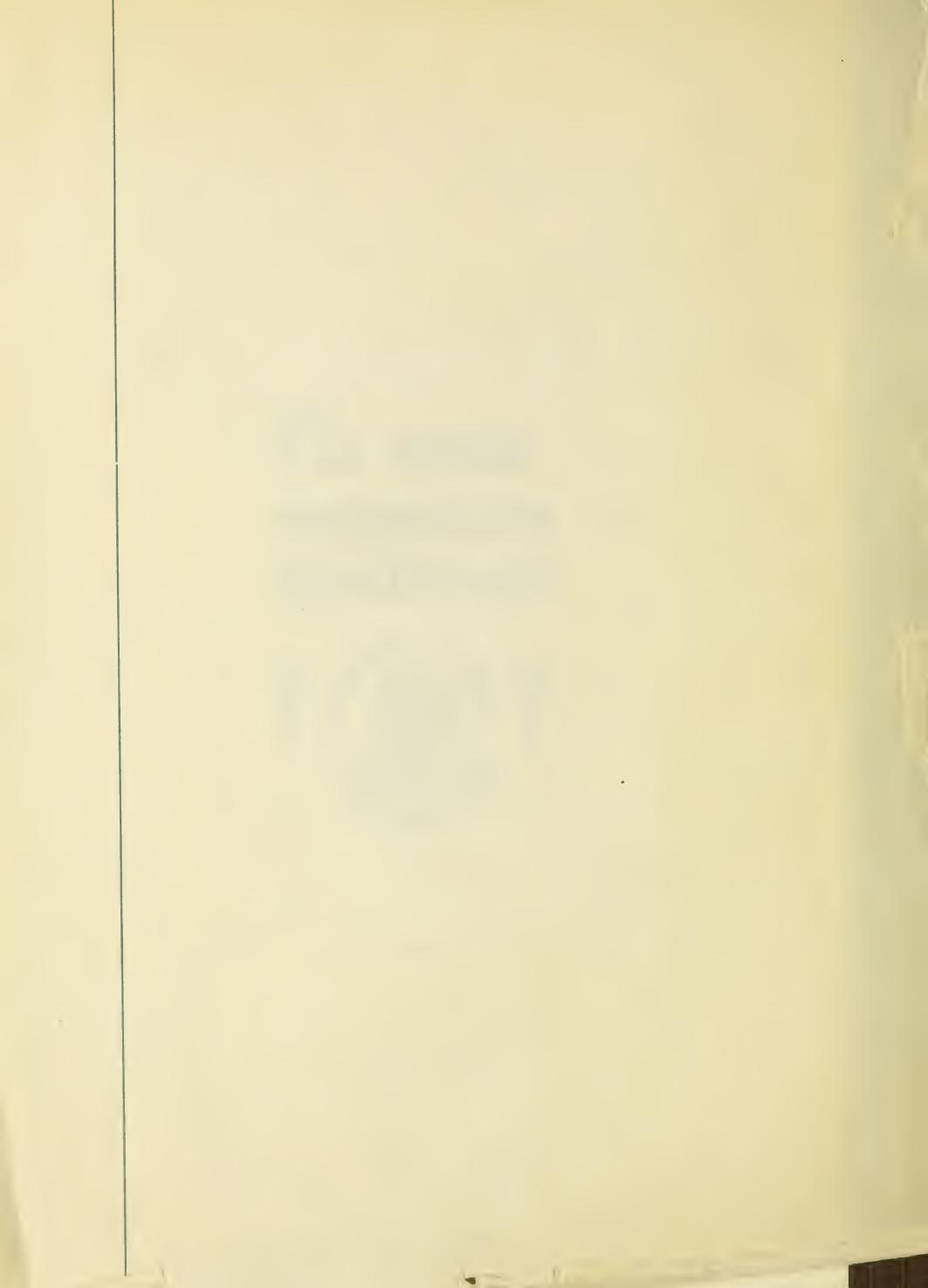
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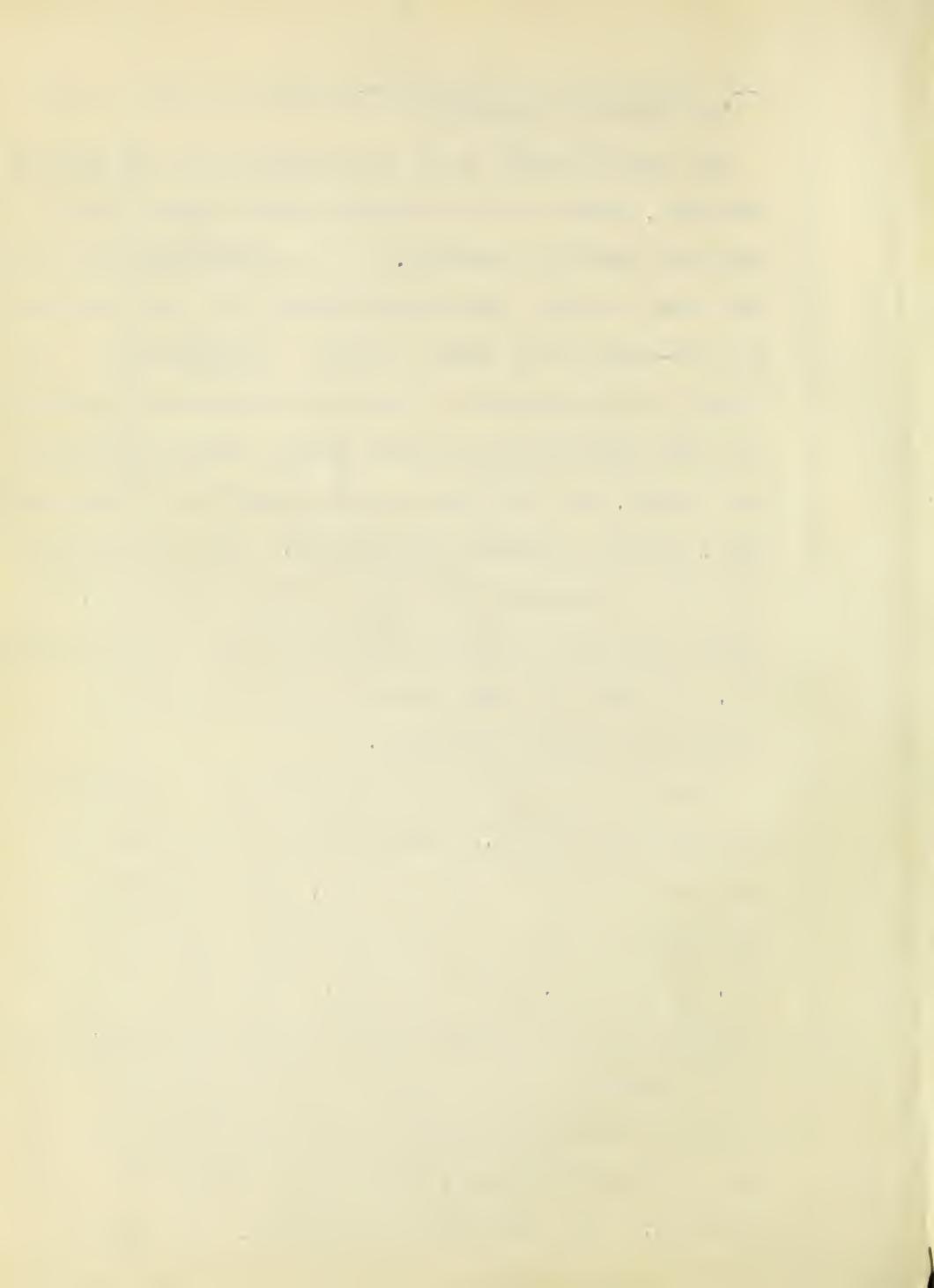
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I--A DEFINITION OF RANCHING--ALBERTA'S PLACE IN THE CONTINENTAL INDUSTRY.

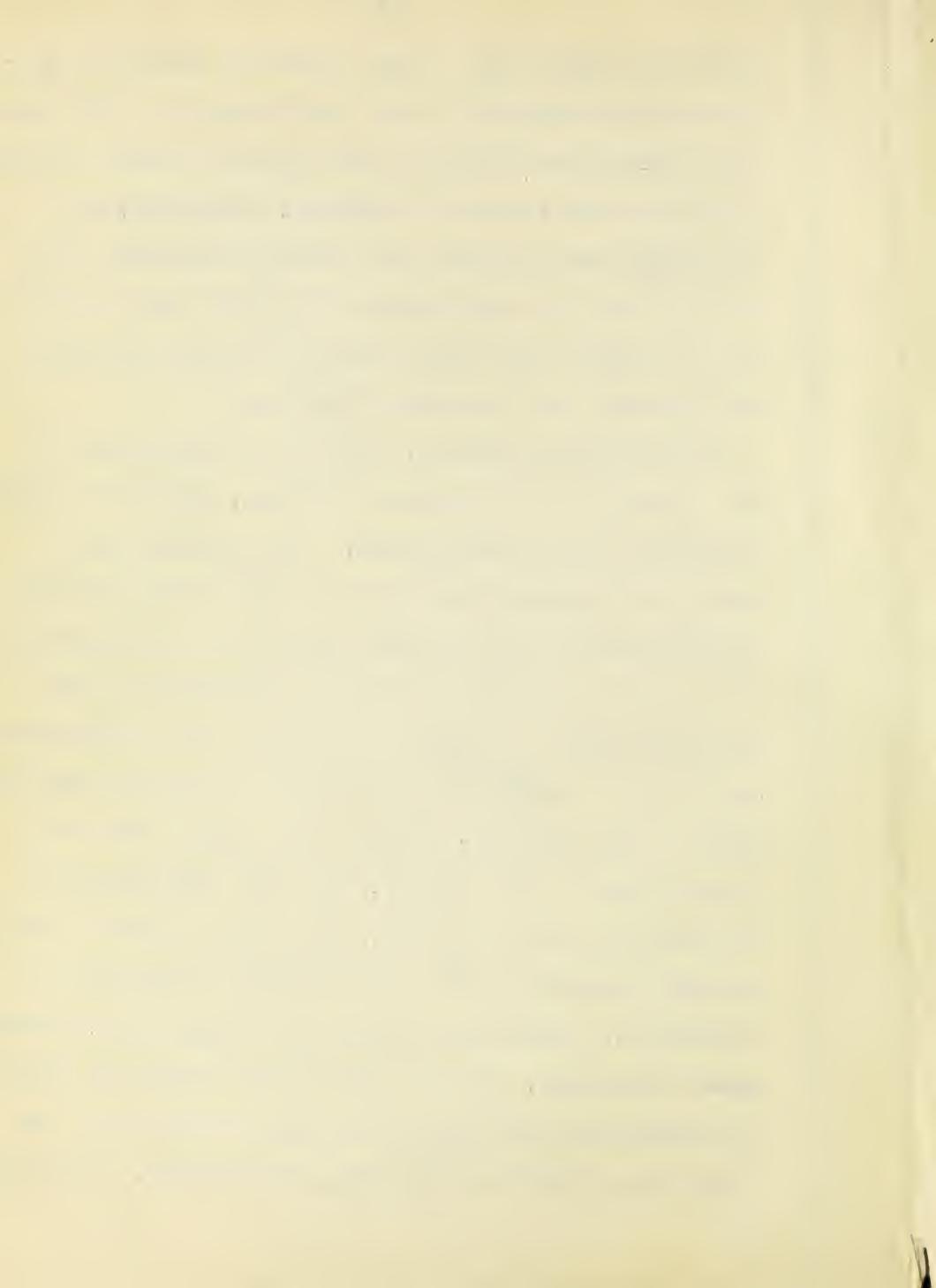
The word "ranch" is an abbreviation of the Spanish "rancho", which in its original sense meant "mess" or "persons feeding together". Used ^{as} substantive, it has come to mean any establishment for the breeding of live-stock on a large scale. Used ^{as} verb, it refers to the conduct of such an establishment. Usually the word implies that either sheep, cattle or horses are raised, but "chicken-ranching", and even "bee-ranching", are not unknown corruptions. For our purposes the word "ranching" will mean "cattle-ranching", for cattle were the premier products of the Alberta industry, although the same methods were successfully applied to horses and sheep.

Ranching is an extensive rather than an intensive agricultural method. Because most of the feed used is obtained without cultivation, more acres of land per head of livestock are required for ranching than for, let us say, mixed farming. Therefore the ranching industry has found newly opened and undeveloped lands, as for example those available in the temperate plains of North and South America during the latter part of the nineteenth century, especially suitable for its purposes. When settlement increased, the larger



population found that a more intensive method of production was essential to the maintenance of the standard of living and ranching was broadly limited to regions which for reasons of climate, fertility, or topography were unsuited for farming purposes. The availability of large areas of suitable land at low prices remains the prime condition for the creation and survival of a ranching industry. ✓

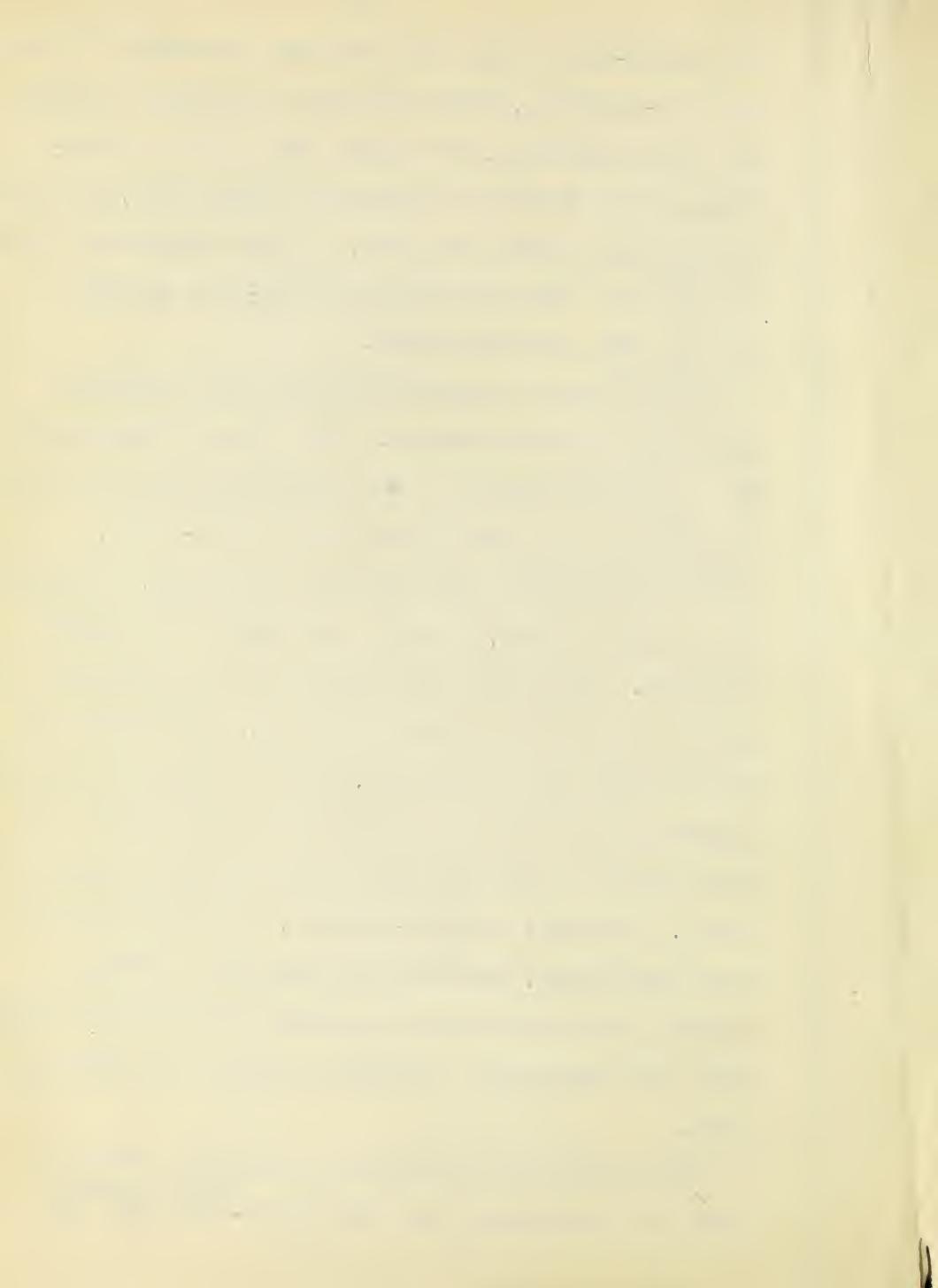
The ranching industry, here to be considered in its connection with Southern Alberta, was by no means of merely local significance. At its height its operations embraced much of the open plains of North America; and in the similar regions of the Argentine it is still an industry of major importance. The ranching area of Southern Alberta was the northernmost extension of that ^{part of the} great plain which in America was the home of the industry. Most of the states from the Mississippi to the Rockies, from the International Boundary to the Rio Grande, were at one time or another chiefly concerned with the extensive production of livestock. Cradled in Mexico and Texas, the industry spread northwards. As the herds pushed into new lands new adaptations were made and a mass of knowledge and tradition, almost wholly oral, accumulated. Settlement



and barbed-wire forced the industry backward. By the eighteen-eighties, when ranching in Southern Alberta was first beginning, the great days of the cattle-kings of the western states were almost over, but the industry had played its part. It had opened the West and with its tradition and its folk-lore greatly enriched the American story.

Behind Alberta ranching lay the whole American experience of the industry. The Alberta development was a special aspect of a continental manifestation. Alberta was the last of the great ranch-lands. American proximity and American experience, in ranching as in other fields, largely influenced the Alberta industry. The United States was the first source of cattle for stocking Canadian ranges; it offered men of knowledge and experience; and it promised a market. Communication with the outside world was easier via Fort Benton in Montana than by the overland Canadian route. Even the whiskey-traders, Southern Alberta's first merchants, were mostly American. Many natural ties drew Southern Alberta into closer contact with the continental industry of which it formed a part.

Evidences of the contact are manifold. Fear of American penetration into the North-West ^{helped to persuade} ~~the~~ ^A the

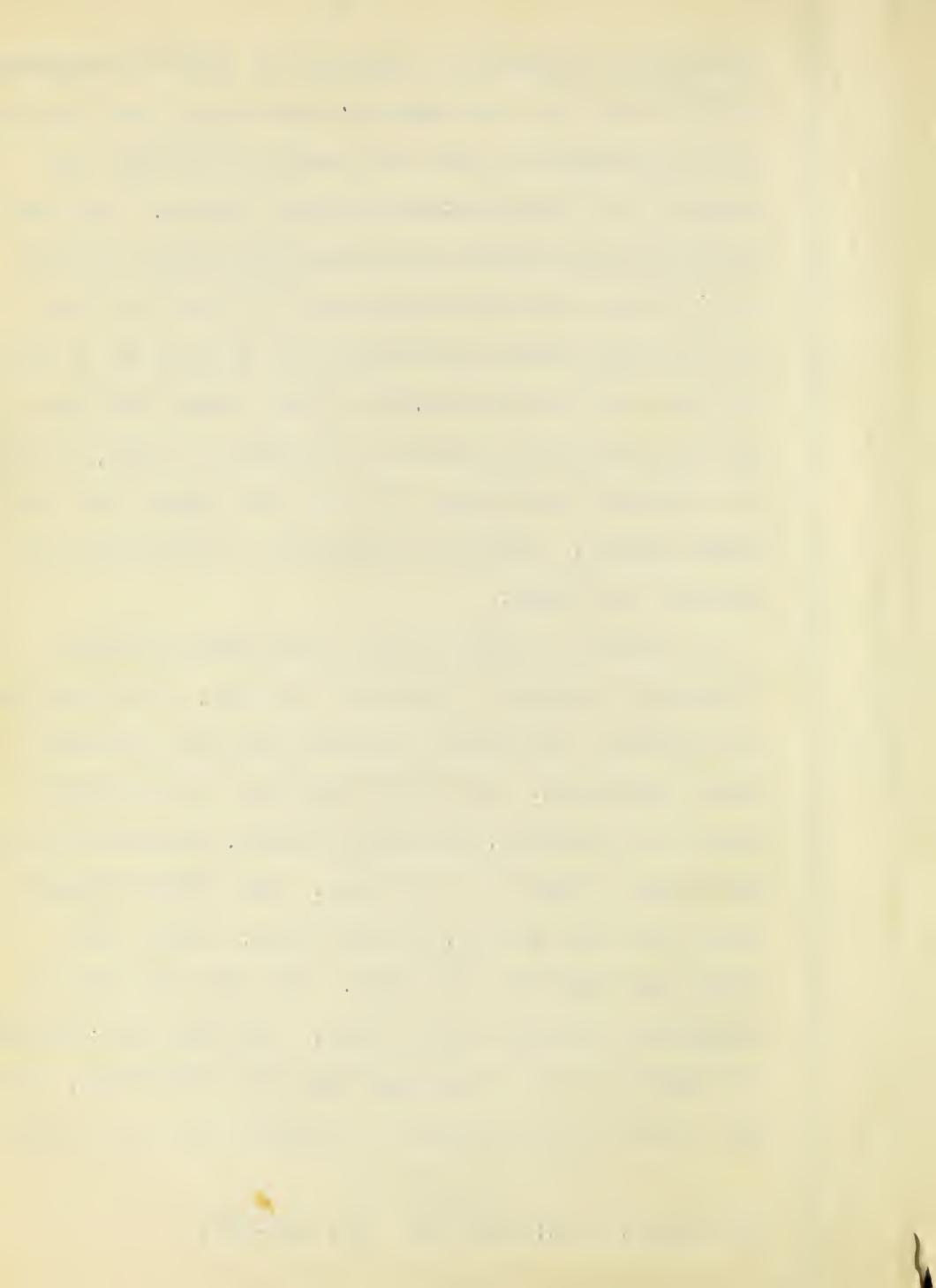


4.

Dominion Government to negotiate in 1870 the ~~acquisition~~
~~its rights in~~
of ^Athe West from the Hudson's Bay Company and encouraged that government to give its control reality by the despatch of the North-West Mounted Police. American ranchers from Montana were among the first to bring range-cattle into the region and to open the long controversy between government and settler as to the disposal of the Indians.(1). When Ottawa decided to put ranching in the West on a regular footing, it was to Montana's experience that the new ranges owed the lease system. Obviously ranching in Alberta was no isolated incident.

To secure a clearer idea of the meaning which "ranching" assumed in Southern Alberta, it is simplest to consider the gradual changes which the industry there underwent. The first "ranches" were merely herds of livestock, generally cattle, although horses were early raised on the range. The owners brought them into the country, branded them, turned them loose and hoped for the best. This was the era of completely free and open range. The land was neither held nor possessed by any individual; title was vested in the Dominion Government and no one had

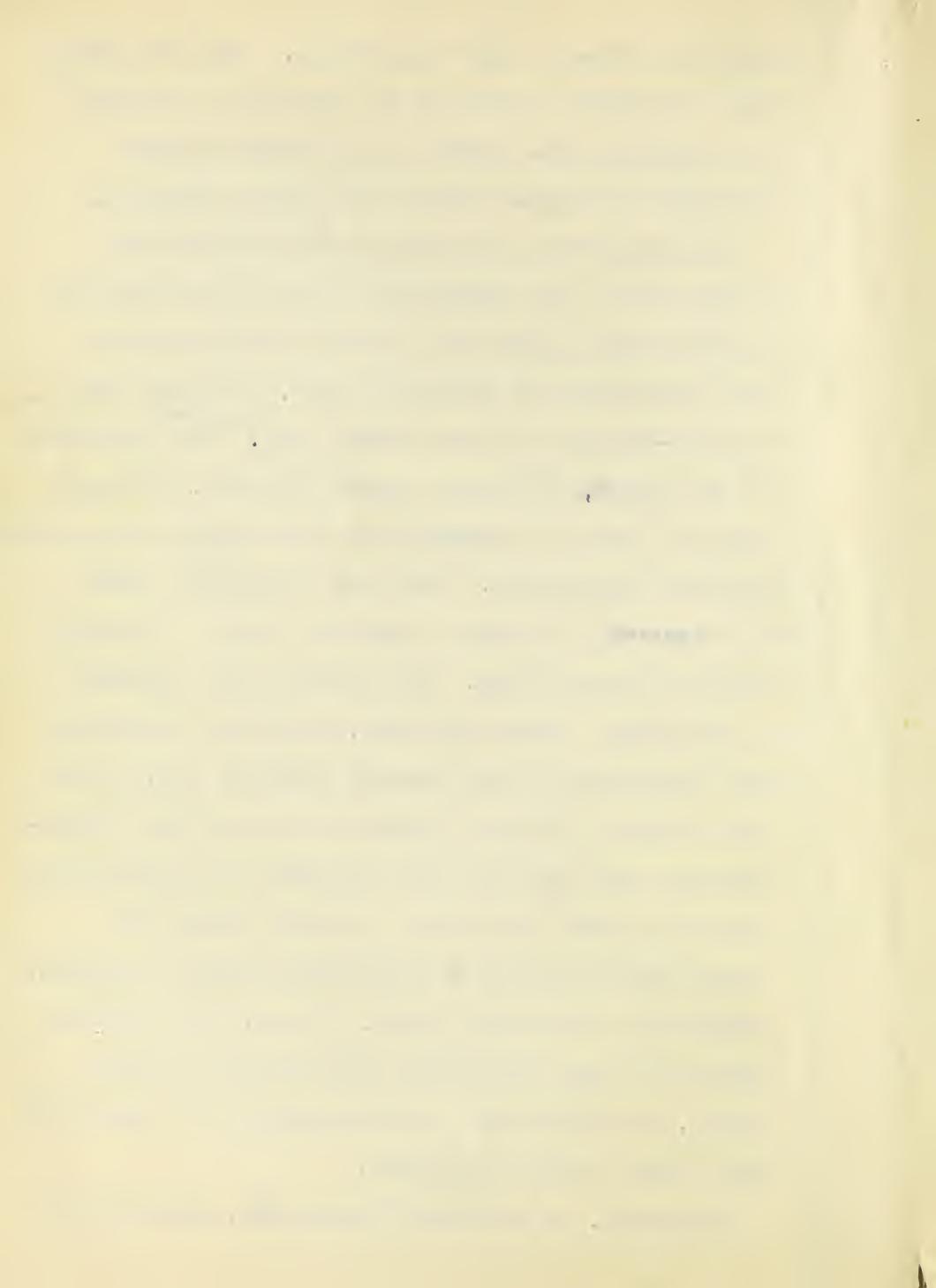
(1) Kelly, L.V.; Range Men pp. 127-128.



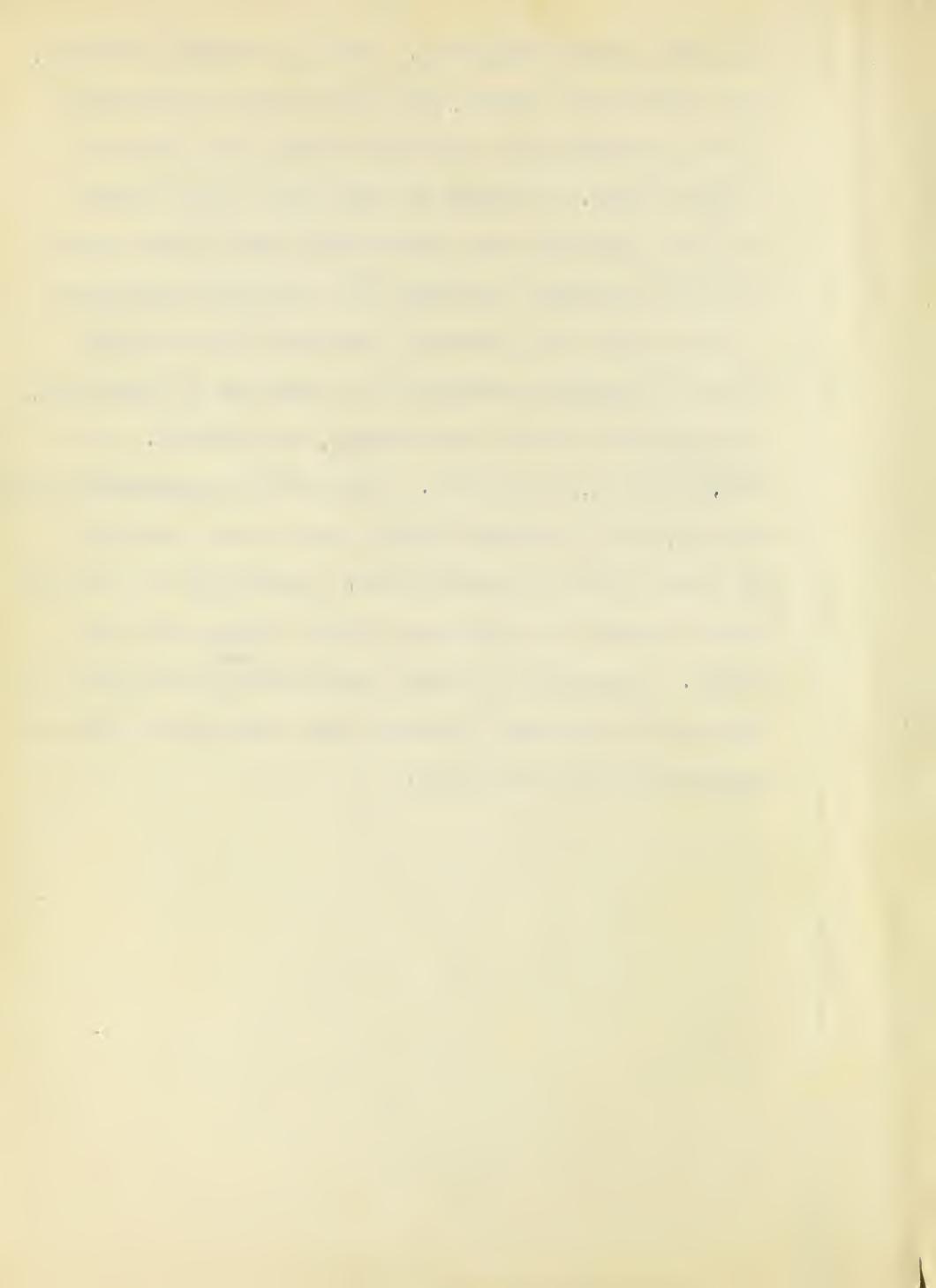
especial claims to any one portion. Such an idyllic state of affairs could not be expected to survive for long and a new system of government leases introduced the great period of Alberta ranching.

The regulations of 1881 and the vicissitudes through which they passed will have to be described in more detail later but a brief consideration of their provisions is desirable here, for they were the fore-runners of the "Golden Age" ^{of ranching.} They provided for the leasing, at almost nominal rentals, of large tracts of land to companies or individuals for grazing purposes exclusively. Upon the leased ^{area,} the lessee was required to place a definite number of beasts/ within a certain time. The lessees were supposed to have their leases surveyed; meanwhile locations were designated in the vaguest possible way, as in some range of hills or between two specified rivers. Provision was made for the purchase of a home-ranch, again at a very low price. A ranch during the "Golden Age" was thus a home-ranch, where buildings, corrals and cultivated lands, if any, were located, usually in some convenient and attractive river-bottom, together with a varying amount of range-land where stock roamed unimpeded.

Gradually, as settlement increased, ranching in



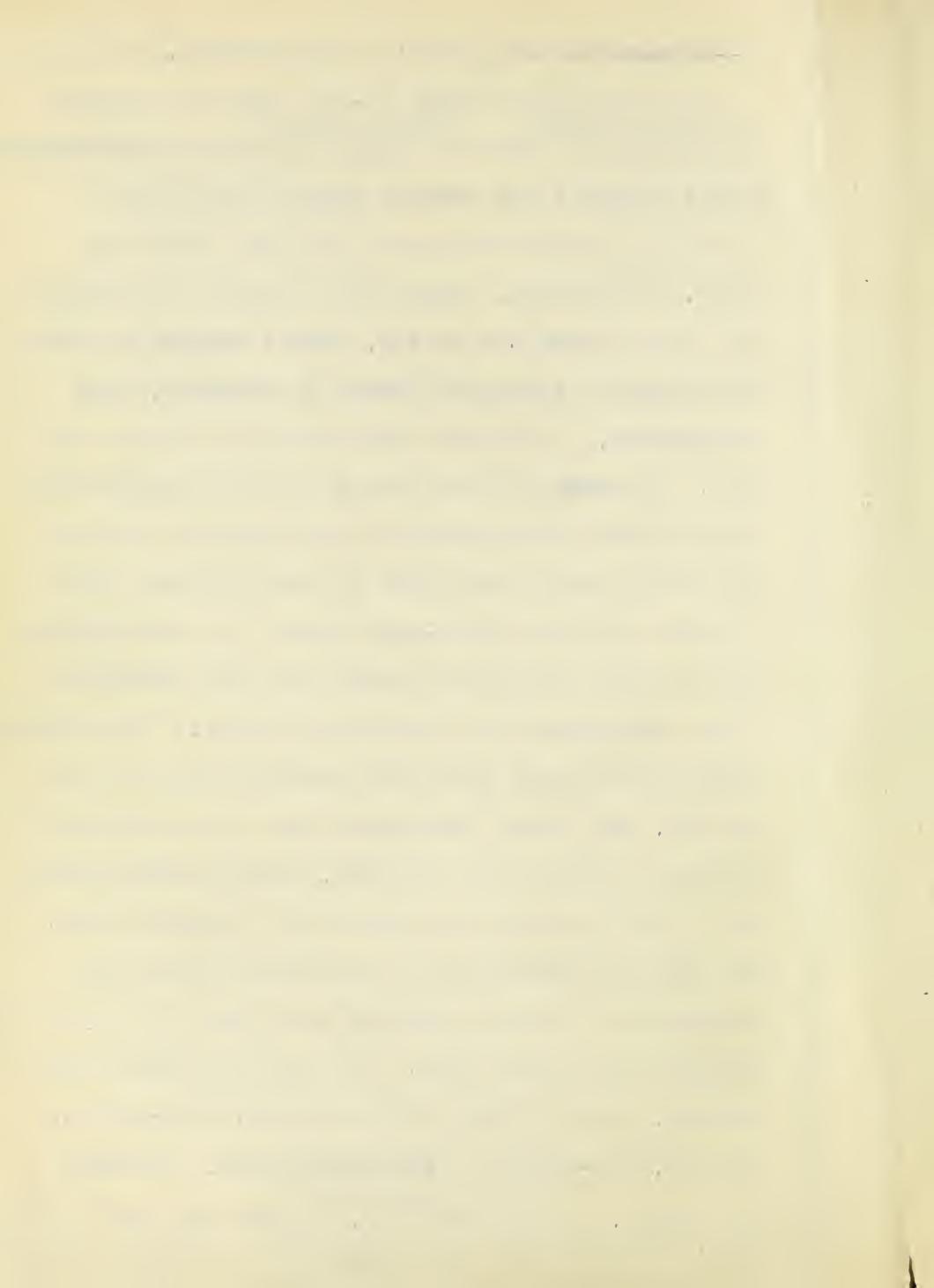
the grand manner declined. Land increased in value, the leases were fenced, the open range disappeared and the ranchers who survived owned more and more of their land. By 1896 all the old closed leases had been cancelled but not before many large tracts had been purchased outright for ranching purposes. On this basis the industry continued but by 1905, except in certain areas, the old methods of ranching, characterized by the open range, had passed. The ~~ranching~~ term, however, persisted. The holdings ~~generally~~ were smaller, but livestock rather than grain remained the focal point of production. Something of the old spirit lived on in regions little changed by the plough. Ranching no longer dominates ^{Southern} Alberta but it remains an important industry and the way of life it engendered still survives.



III--Early Misapprehensions as to ALBERTA'S POSSIBILITIES and their Correction

The territories which to-day comprise Southern and Southwestern Saskatchewan ^{the transfer of the West to} Alberta were at the time of the Dominion's ~~annexation~~ ~~of the Hudson's Bay Company lands~~ preeminently fitted to become the last of the great ranching areas. Unoccupied, except for a handful of traders and Indians ~~and the latter, except known as they were always a practical menace to savages, were negligible,~~ it offered large areas of land at low cost. The country in which ranching became especially important was that portion of the present province of Alberta which lies south of the Red Deer River together with the south-west corner of Saskatchewan. Besides mere unoccupied extent, the area possessed other advantages for a ranching country. Its surface, fairly flat except along the eastern slope of the Rockies, was broken throughout most of its area by coulees and deep river valleys, usually well-wooded and affording excellent shelter for ranging stock. — The prairie vegetation in its natural state was — possessed of certain peculiar qualities which make it available as winter feed. Not only are these wild grasses, which include buffalo-grass, blue-joint, and timothy, ^{and} oat-grass (1) ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~, extremely

(1) Diller, quoting Harcourt, "Canada and its Provinces" p. 589 mentions that in Alberta at least 96 varieties of wild grasses have been identified, of which 46 make good hay.



nutritious to stock, but they cure on the stalk in the autumn and provide excellent winter feed without the necessity of hay-making. The climate was similarly favourable. The low humidity discouraged disease among the animals and the prevalence of Chinook winds, especially in the areas adjacent to the Rockies, made practical the wintering of stock outdoors, as the ^{winds} melted the snow at intervals and exposed the grasses for pasturage. As the region is very dry, scarcity of water was something of a problem in the eastern sections, although along the foothills springs and mountain streams provided water in abundance.

These numerous advantages, so obvious now, required a good deal of exploration and advertisement before the original misconception of the character of the Canadian West could be overcome. The fur-trading interests were naturally not enthusiastic champions of the region's potentialities, for settlement and fur-trade are irreconcilable. Therefore they fostered the impression that the whole North-West was an arid, barren and frost-bound waste. Giving evidence before the Committee which in 1857 was investigating the Hudson's Bay Company's rule, Sir George Simpson who, as Governor of the Company for thirty-eight years had had ample opportunity to view

the country, testified: "I do not think that any part of the Hudson's Bay Company's territories is well adapted for settlement; the crops are very uncertain." Whatever services the Company rendered to Canada, the encouragement of settlement was not among them. Nevertheless Company servants inevitably indicated the region's agricultural potentialities by the success they achieved in the cultivation of field and garden crops around their posts.

In MacKenzie's Voyages (2) there is mention of a kitchen-garden in Northern Alberta: "In the fall of the year 1787, when I first arrived in Athabasca, Mr. Pond was settled on the banks of the Elk River, and had farmed as fine a kitchen-garden as I ever saw in Canada." MacKenzie, however, held the conventional Company-servant view of the country's future; "The whole of this country will long continue in the possession of its present inhabitants (the Indians) as they will remain contented with the produce of the woods and waters for their support, leaving the earth in its virgin state. The proportion of it that is fit for cultivation is very small, and is still less in the interior parts;

(2) Alexander MacKenzie: "Voyages from Montreal to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans", p. 129.

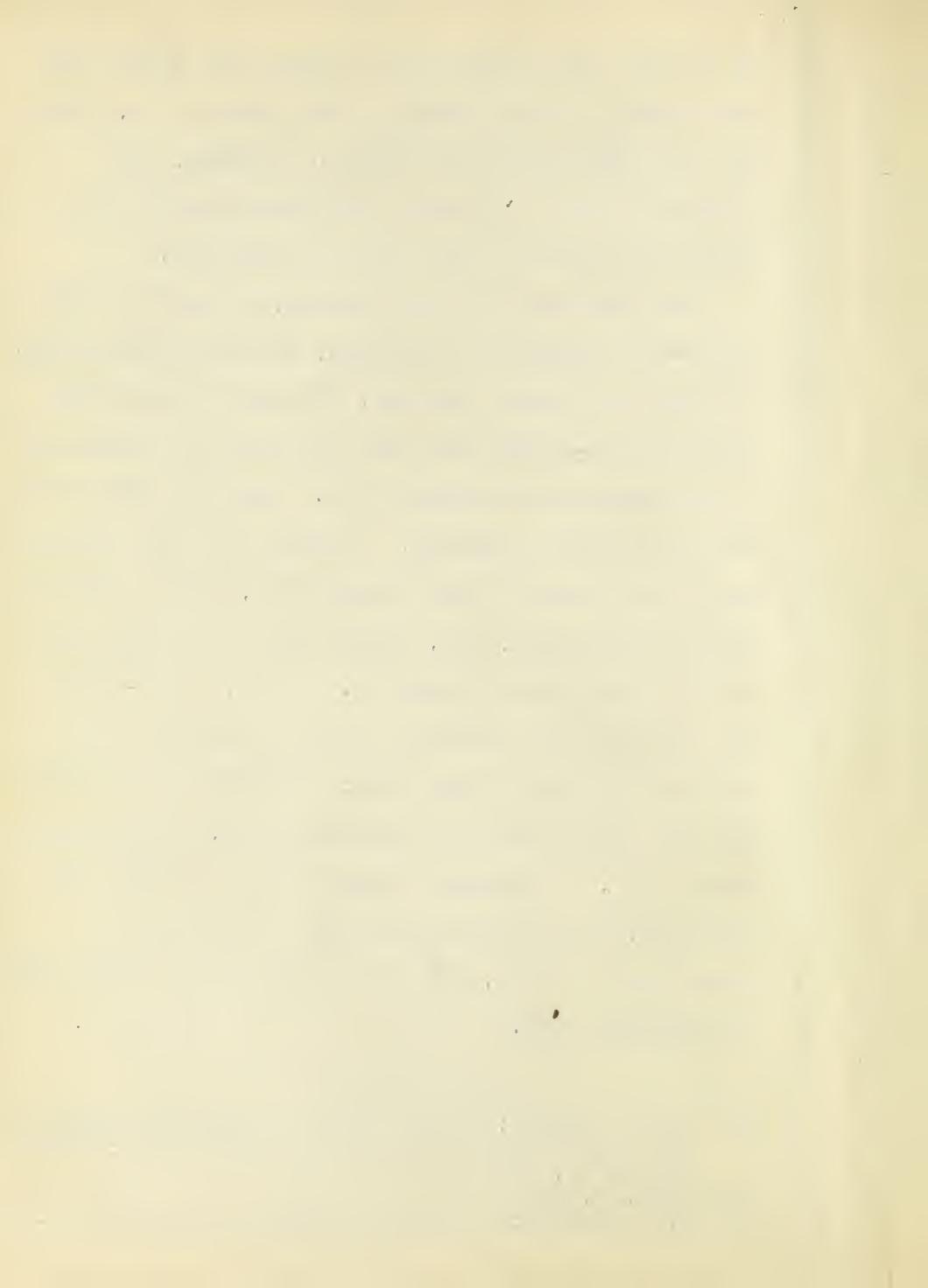
it is also very difficult of access and whilst any land remains uncultivated to the south of it, there will be ~~no~~ temptation to settle. Besides, its climate is not in general sufficiently genial to bring the fruits of the earth to maturity."

The testimony of David Harmon, an agent of the North-West Company at Dunvegan, was more favourable. In 1808 his Journal records: "We have a tolerably good kitchen-garden and shall not want the means of a comfortable subsistence" (3). Again in 1809: "We have cut down our barley. I think it is the finest that I ever saw in any country" (4), and in 1810 he writes that wheat, rye, barley and oats "would grow well on the plains around us." Ross, a fur-trader who visited Fort Edmonton in 1825 describes its agricultural activities thus: "Attached to the place are two large parks for raising grain, and the soil being good, it produces large crops of barley and potatoes; but the spring and fall frosts prove injurious to wheat, which in consequence seldom come to maturity" (5).

(3) Daniel Harmon: "A Journal of Voyage and Travel in the Interior of North America (The Trail-Makers of Canada) p. 142

(4) Ibid. p. 146

(5) W.E. Edmonds: "A Brief History of Edmonton" p. 6.



11.

Scientific exploration in Alberta began in 1857, when two official expeditions were sent to the West (6). Captain Palliser, whose journeyings covered the period from 1857 to 1860 was commissioned by the British Government to explore "that portion of British North America which lies between the northern watershed and the frontier of the United States, and between the Red River and the Rocky Mountains," and to endeavour to find a practicable route through it. The expedition of S.J. Dawson and Professor Hind (1857-1858) was sent by the government of the Canadas to examine the resources of the Red River Colony and ~~the~~^{of} Assiniboine and Saskatchewan countries. In his report Hind wrote of the discovery of "a fertile belt of country extending from the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains," and elsewhere he remarked, "North of the great American desert there is a broad strip of fertile country, rich in water, wood and pasturage, drained by the North Saskatchewan, and a continuation of the fertile prairies of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. It is a physical reality of the highest importance to the interests of British North America that this continuous belt can be settled and cultivated."

(6) Dorothy Diller: "The Early Economic Development of Alberta." p. 52.

Palliser's report, published in 1863, also described a fertile belt of country lying between the great American desert to the south and the northern forest area, a belt which included all of present Alberta south of the North Saskatchewan except for an arid patch in the south where the central desert region of the United States "extends for a short way into Canada, forming a triangle having for its base the 49th parallel from longitude 100° to 110° and with its apex reaching to the 52nd parallel of latitude." These two reports established as fact the existence of rich, arable land in the North-West, and as Miss Diller remarks, captured public imagination in England and Canada with the phrase "fertile belt". However, the reports did little to shatter popular illusions about Southern Alberta, and Palliser's ~~xxx~~ strengthened the belief that that region was arid and useless. Its possibilities for the rancher remained so obscure that as late as 1871 Butler described it as "arid, treeless and impossible of settlement" (7).

More favourable reports began to circulate after the inauguration of the boundary survey in 1872 and

(7) Capt. W.F. Butler: "The Great Lone Land" p. 374.

the arrival of the North-West Mounted Police in 1874. An exceedingly interesting forecast of the productive areas was made on March 1 1872, in Colonel John Stoughton Dennis's first reports to the Secretary of State. Basing his classification on reports of official explorations, and information obtained from the Hudson's Bay Company's posts and from mission stations, Dennis estimated that there were 32,000,000 acres unavailable for cultivation, being the extension of the great American desert into Canadian territory; 76,800,000 acres of prairie country unsurpassed for agricultural purposes with occasional groves and belts of timber; 298,384,000 acres of timber-land with occasional large prairies (as in the Peace River district) adapted for the growth of wheat and other cereals and possessing an abundance of timber; 594,048,000 acres sufficiently supplied with timber and adapted for the cultivation of potatoes, barley and grasses; and 411,072,000 acres of fur-producing region, rock, swamp, and barren lands, in which the timber growth extending up from the south gradually disappears." (8).

(8) "Canada and its Provinces", Archives Edition 1914
Volume XIX Section 10, Part 1, page 156.

Professor Macoun, whose explorations were carried on intermittently between 1875 and 1880, embodied his observations in a book "Manitoba and the Great North-West," which appeared in 1882. He regarded the arid appearance of much of the southern plains as the result of prairie fires, not of natural climatic conditions. The Marquis of Lorne while Governor-General had visited Southern Alberta in 1881 and his widely-circulated remark that if he had his life to live over again he would be a rancher in the Canadian North-West—"God's Country" he called it with viceregal unselfconsciousness—was an excellent advertisement for the new country and the new industry. By 1882 indeed there were enough settlers in Southern Alberta to correct the old misapprehensions and that territory was regarded as one of the most promising stock-countries of North America.

III--AREAS IN ALBERTA DEVOTED TO RANCHING AT VARIOUS PERIODS.

The ranching country varied in extent and position at various ~~times~~ in its history. Roughly the ranching areas may be said to have comprised at their largest extent the part of the present Province of Alberta which lies to the south of the Red Deer River, and certain similar adjacent areas in Southern Saskatchewan. The boundaries of the Provisional District of Alberta differed substantially from those of the Province of the same name. The eastern boundary of the provisional district lay sixty miles west of the provincial boundary and the important ranching districts around Medicine Hat ~~were~~ included in the Provisional District of Assiniboia. The total area in which ranching was at some time the predominant industry would be very approximately 35,000 square miles in extent.

The first ranches were established in the vicinity of the police-posts which offered security, markets and company. When their terms of service expired, many of the police decided to remain in the country and they too naturally established their ranches not far from their old comrades. The first herds thus had their headquarters near Fort Macleod and Fort Calgary or such subsidiary posts as High River and

Pincher Creek. The long belt of foothill country which extends from the boundary north past Cochrane and Morley was, with its prairie hinterland, regarded as especially desirable for ranching purposes. The first leases lay in this region, an almost solid strip of country about forty miles wide running from the boundary to a point fifteen miles north of Calgary. There were outlying leases granted even in 1882 but none lay east of Range 18 west of the Fourth Meridian, or north of Township 30. The ranches, or at least the home ranches, kept close to water and shelter, and settlement, while ranching remained the premier industry, followed the innumerable rivers and creeks which intersect the foothills and the **prairies** beyond. The leases which were granted from 1883 to 1887, with 1882 the great year of lease-granting, were seldom far from the block described, although there were leases as far north as Innisfail and ~~xxxxxx~~ east to the present Saskatchewan border. Many of the leases granted were never taken up and the majority of those that were not lay too far from water. *

In the south the chief centres of settlement, where the leases clustered thickest, were the valleys of the Belly, the Kootenai, the Old Man and the St. Mary's Rivers. Moving north, Willow Creek,

Mosquito Creek, the Little Bow, the Highwood, Sheep Creek, Fish Creek and the Bow and Elbow Rivers were important ranching centres. All along the Bow from west of Morley to the Forks of the South Saskatchewan were large leases. The Red Deer River further north was mentioned as an important point of settlement in 1883 (1). The chief leases on this river were granted after 1884, on its upper waters and its tributaries. A number of leases were granted between 1883 and 1887 on Milk River and in the Cypress Hills, though few of them were cattle ranches. Indeed in 1884 when many of them were granted, there was only one cattle-ranch in the territory then opened to sheep and that was adjacent to the Peigan Reserve (2). In the Medicine Hat district the first big ranch was started in 1886 by the Medicine Hat Ranching Company. Although water was always a problem in these south-eastern districts, within a few years there were nearly as many cattle on these ranges as on those elsewhere (3).

The tendency of settlement to cling to streams had an unfortunate result. Water and shelter were essential to successful ranching. The homesteaders

(1) Macleod Gazette, April 24, 1883; "Surveys".

(2) Order-in-council, Oct. 6, 1884.

(3) Kelly, p. 193.

selected their locations and fenced them. Bench lands were destined to prove superior to the valleys for farming operations, but the homesteaders, most of whom really intended to raise livestock, preferred the valleys. Their fences cut the ranchers off from the water and shelter of the valleys and they were forced back into the hills and the drier areas of Palliser's Triangle. Then settlement began to close the open range, over which the ranchers' cattle had grazed, although their leases had been chiefly in the block described. Only the lands which were quite useless for farming remained to the ranchers. In the foothills of the Rockies, in the Cypress and Porcupine Hills, in the Medicine Hat region and in the valleys of the lower Red Deer, the Little Bow, the South Saskatchewan and the Milk Rivers, the citadels of their old ranges, the remaining ranchers took their last stand and there, to a degree, they have found security.

IV--THE NECESSITIES OF A STOCK-RAISING COMMUNITY

(a) Law and Order.

A pastoral community ~~does not require such as~~ complicated a social and economic organization as that which would be required by ~~less primitive~~ communities. Nevertheless certain conditions are essential to the successful development of a stock-raising community; a measure of security, some prospect of markets, and some form of land organization. After the Dominion's acquisition of the West, the primary necessity was the establishment of law and order. The work of the North-West Mounted Police was thus of paramount importance in the history of the ranching community.

The Hudson's Bay Company had never been especially active in what was to be Southern Alberta. The region, largely prairie, was not ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ productive of the more valuable furs, and the tribes which controlled it were notoriously dangerous. After a few half-hearted attempts to establish the ^{fur-} trade in the "Bow Country", as it was called, the Company withdrew and was content with the hope that the Blackfeet would come to them, since they did not feel it worthwhile to go to

the Blackfeet.

With the weakening of the Company's control and the growth of free-trading during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, a number of free-traders established themselves in Southern Alberta. Chiefly Americans, with considerable experience in dealing with the red man across the border, they built themselves ^{International} posts at strategic points near the ^ABoundary, their more notorious strongholds including Kipp, Stand-Off, Slide Out and Whoop Up. From these expressively named retreats they dispensed whiskey to the Indians at remarkable prices and flourished exceedingly. Even more unsavoury characters were the "Wolfers" who had their headquarters at Spitzee (near the present town of High River). They made their living by slaughtering the abundant timber-wolves for their skins.

The character of the ^{established} ^Ainhabitants of Southern Alberta in 1870 was hardly such as to encourage the intending settler. The fate of ^{his} herd of cattle, ~~apart from~~ the fact that buffalo still existed in large numbers, ^{could} easily be imagined. Other considerations were not wanting and therefore in 1870 the first thought of the Dominion Government was the establishment of some degree of law and order in its new territories. Realizing that their

time of liberty was short, the independent traders between 1870 and 1874 achieved new heights of ingenuity in their exploitation of the Indians. When in 1874 the Mounted Police did arrive and establish posts, the traders accepted the new order without much resistance. The Force succeeded further in winning the confidence of the Indians. With that deceptive appearance of effortless ease so characteristic of its more remarkable achievements the phenomenal police force had taken the first and greatest step towards the establishment of law and order.

Although what Colonel Robertson-Ross had called "an easy and agreeable march of a few weeks' duration" had brought a measure of security to Southern Alberta, in 1874 ranching was a distant possibility. The buffalo were not extinct and the few men who brought cattle from Montana were so discouraged by the depredations of thieves, white and otherwise, that in 1879 most of them retired across the line with the remnants of their herds (1). The attitude of Police officials during these early years was

(1) Kelly, p.128.

22.

understandable; they did not believe that the country was ready for settlement and they thought that those who wanted to bring cattle into the country should be willing to take their losses. The Police could not risk offending the Indians; prestige alone enabled the tiny force to control them, and if they were ever aroused the whole white colony might perish. They could not allow the Indians to be treated as the stockmen, with American precedent behind them, suggested.

Unquestionably Police policy was well founded on reality, and furthermore, as they pointed out, Indians were not always responsible for the ranchers' losses. More cattle died from carelessness than were stolen but the rancher was content to rest in the illusion that his losses were exclusively the result of theft (2).

In spite of these difficulties, settlers continued to come into the country and bring livestock with them. Although the Police doubted the country's readiness for settlement, they did their best to protect property and met with reasonable success. The unforgivable sin in the eyes of ranchers was

(2) Kelly, p. 128 et seq.

theft of stock. Not only Indians, American and Canadian, were guilty; there were plenty of white thieves from both sides of the border. The ranchers would have given suspects short shrift but the law required that the thief be seen or taken in the act. Under such circumstances it was difficult to secure a conviction and many of the guilty escaped. The police could not be blamed; they did their duty efficiently; if the law made evasion easy it was not the fault of the force.

There was a certain friction between the Police and the ranchers, but on the whole the ^{Force} ~~A~~ seems to have had the confidence of the bulk of the settlers. Their "mutual understanding of the sanctity of a profession, and also of the underlying gallantry of life preserved to the force the goodwill of their communities of rough men" (3). During the whole early period, the standard of order in Southern Alberta, taking into consideration the ~~extent~~ of the country and the ~~smallness~~ of the police force, seems to have been extremely high. Apparently Ottawa was satisfied, for in the 1880 report of the Minister of the Interior we read of the general satisfactory

(3) T. Morris Longstreth; "The Silent Force" p. 115.

state of affairs in the district due "to the presence of the North-West Mounted Police, the administration of justice by the stipendiary Magistrates, the repression of the traffic in intoxicating liquor, and the prompt punishment of crime, as well as to the natural disposition of the inhabitants." (4).

During the ranching era security was so complete as to be taken for granted. Cattle and horses frequently changed hands without benefit of purchase and contraventions of the liquor law were legion but more violent crime was rare. Occasional murders aroused deep public indignation, as we may judge from the spirited accounts in Kelly's "Range Men" but the very indignation was indicative of their rarity. In those halcyon days, loyal Albertans could look southward and hug themselves justifiably in gleeful and law-abiding superiority.

(4) Sessional Papers 1880 Vol. XIII No. 3 Papers 4 page 10.

(b) Markets

Fundamental order once established, the ranching community would discover a second necessity--markets. If people find it difficult to live by taking in one another's washing, they will find it equally difficult to live by buying one another's beef. Mounted police detachments provided the first market for Alberta beef. The contracts for their supply were held by an active and enterprising firm, I.G. Baker and Company of Fort Benton, Montana, who were willing to buy all the beef locally available (5). Another market was developing. The buffalo were rapidly disappearing, indeed by 1879 they had completely vanished (6), and the Indians, who depended upon the herds for food, were starving. The government was compelled to feed its wards, and these contracts too were awarded to I.G. Baker and Company. Indeed, prior to the arrival of the Railway, this company was the only buyer.

While transport remained as primitive as it was before 1885, the year which saw the completion of the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the ranchers of Southern Alberta were limited to the local market.

(5) Kelly, pp. 50-51.

(6) Ibid. p. 48.

The railway reached Calgary in 1883 and the section between that point and Medicine Hat was in operation by 1884. The new possibilities for ranching were enormous. The building of the road itself gave a strong stimulus to Alberta cattle-production, for the labourers on the construction-gangs consumed an enormous amount of beef. C.P.R. beef contracts gave many an Alberta rancher his "start". The new road opened the markets of Eastern Canada and the rest of the world to the new ranches and considerably increased the capacity of the local market. Settlement followed the railways and increased settlement meant a larger demand for beef.

The completion of the main line of the C.P.R. ushered in the hey-day of Alberta ranching ^{but in prosperity were implicit the forces of ultimate decline}. Without decline it the industry would have been doomed to local stagnation, subsisting entirely upon contracts paid for in Eastern Canada. The railway company unfortunately ^{for the ranching industry} could not make its Alberta sections a paying concern on the freight of ranch products alone. It needed settlements and would do everything in its power to encourage immigration. Settlement would inevitably follow steel and with equal inevitability settlement meant the extinction of

ranching as it was understood in 1885. If the ranchers could have managed with the main line alone they might have saved themselves. The main line merely skirted the ranching country; if no branch lines had been built the heart of the industry would have remained intact. The building of the main line opened new vistas to ranching; the building of the Southern Alberta branch lines closed them irrevocably. Whether, without branch lines, ranching could have maintained itself, remains an academic question. Long drives to get cattle to shipping-points would have been necessary, but Macleod and Pincher Creek ranchers prospered exceedingly before the railway reached them.

By 1885 ample markets had been established for the products of Alberta ranches. For all the cattle they raised the ranchers could reasonably expect to find sale. The second great necessity had been realized. Naturally an increased demand had implied a greatly increased production and by 1885 the industry was firmly established as the most important factor in Alberta's economy.

(c) Some form of Land Organization--Cheap Land in Large Quantities--Surveys.

To make available large areas of land at low prices in southern Alberta required the establishment of some form of land organization. ~~original~~ Title to the land in Southern Alberta, ~~was~~ ~~vested~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~MacKenzie~~ ~~Bay~~ ~~Syndicate~~ ~~and~~ ~~was~~ ~~transferred~~ ~~to~~ the Government of the Dominion of Canada from 1870. Prior to 1881 owners of herds pastured them, without benefit of lease, on what was virtually government land, for although the Dominion Lands Act of 1872 provided from its inception for the disposal of lands for grazing purposes, they were not much sought until 1881 (7). Such a system, if system it could be called, would have led in due course to complete chaos, to overcrowding, to degeneration of breed and to endless confusion of ownership.

To avoid these highly undesirable consequences a new system was established by an order-in-council of May 20, 1881 (modified December 23, 1881) which was designed to establish conditions suitable to the development of the ranching industry. It provided for the grant to individuals and corporations of leases, for grazing purposes exclusively, of areas

not exceeding one hundred thousand acres for a period not exceeding twenty-one years at an annual rental of ten dollars per thousand acres. Within three years the lessee was to have placed on the lease one head of livestock for every ten acres. The total number of live stock for each range was strictly limited. When the lease had been ^{so} stocked the lessee was entitled to acquire an area of up to five per cent of the area of his lease, within his lease, for a home farm, corrals etc., at two dollars an acre. The whole system depended upon surveys, without which its initiation would have been impossible. Subsequent alterations will be considered elsewhere but these are in brief the fundamentals of the system which prevailed throughout the "Golden Age."

V--THE DEVELOPMENT OF RANCHING.

(a) The First Ranchers.

The whiskey-traders had been the first to exploit Southern Alberta's possibilities. Their headquarters had been Fort Benton, in the heart of the Montana ranching country, and it would have been surprising if they had not ~~observed~~^{for ranching} the potentialities of their chosen field of exploitation. The establishment of the Police at Fort Macleod ended their uncontested sway and there remained no reason why they should not reveal the suitability of their erstwhile kingdom to the purposes of the Montana cattlemen. By 1875 signs of the changing times were visible. "Life at Fort Macleod had taken on refinements which were very disturbing to the critical handful of reformed whiskey-traders. There were two stores now. And a woman had come to town, or worse, a lady, the bride of Colonel Macleod. In her presence conversation became constrained. And it looked as if the traders might have to consider marrying their squaws. And when gentlemen called at the fort of an evening, the talk drifted to the possibility of cattle supplanting buffalo on the range, and other radical notions" (1).

(1) Longstreh p. 69.

It is difficult to say definitely who brought the first range cattle into ^{Southern} Alberta. The McDougalls, famous family of Methodist missionaries, who settled at Morleyville, west of Cochrane, undoubtedly brought the first cattle into Southern Alberta. However, the cattle which they brought in in 1871 were not range cattle, but came from Edmonton. The next year they did trail a herd in from Montana, but the Morleyville Mission lay north of the range country proper.(2).

The Red River Settlement had had disastrous adventures with range cattle in the eighteen-thirties, but American success had proved the possibilities of the prairies. However, the first cattle in the Alberta range country were dairy stock, brought in ^x to supply the Police posts (3). There was a legend ^{current} ^{at Ft. Macleod} ^{already} that a pioneer rancher ^{had} four or five hundred cattle at the forks of the Red Deer and the Saskatchewan, a legend that in 1878 put an effective ^{since it was felt that such a herd could permanently supply the West -} damper on any other ranching enterprise(4). In 1877 the Western prairie Indians signed Treaty Number 7, surrendering their lands to the Canadian Government. In the same year the first range cattle were placed

(2) Kelly, p. 111

(3) Ibid. pp. 112 et seq.

(4) Ibid. p. 115.

on the Southern Alberta range and a number of men began ranching in a small way, a few from Montana ~~but~~ for the most part ~~and~~^{ex} ex-Mounted Policemen (5).

From 1877 on, small ~~bands~~^{herds} of range-cattle were being brought ~~driven~~^{owners setting} into Alberta from the United States, most of their ~~keepers~~^{herds} in the neighborhood of Macleod. ✓ A number of well-known ranchers had their initiation into the business in these early days. Unfortunately Indian depredations and climatic conditions so discouraged these first pioneers that in 1879 most of them crossed into Montana with the remnants of their herds (6), although they came back when the Order-in-Council of 1881 introduced a new dispensation which seemed to promise prosperity. These pioneer ranchers had sad reverses, but their attempts laid the first foundation for the ranching industry.

(5) Kelly, pp. 120 et seq.

(6) Ibid, p. 128.

(b) The Development of Ranching Before the Railway.

With the introduction of the new lease regulations a novel phenomenon appeared in the ranching world,— the ranch company. Attracted by glowing tales of the vast profits to be made in the cattle business, Eastern Canadian, British and American capitalists took up large leases in the choicest districts of South-Western Alberta. Some were speculators, ~~attracted~~ by the opportunity to secure ~~such~~ enormous amounts of land at ~~such~~ slight cost; others were genuinely interested in the ranching industry and invested large sums in the country. The local managers for the companies were usually men with ranching experience, or at least Canadian or American stockmen with Eastern training. Unfortunately nepotism occasionally triumphed over wisdom, and men of no experience and little ability were appointed. The companies were not too popular in the West, as may be gathered from the local press (7). Sometimes they treated their local employees with scant consideration—John R. Craig's book, "Ranching With Lords and Commons", is a rather one-sided presentation of his tribulations as local manager of the Oxley Ranch. The sins of the companies

(7) See also Kelly pp. 150-151.

appear to have been the result of complete ignorance of Western conditions and an unfortunate confusion of authority rather than malice or dishonesty.

Whatever may be said for or against the companies, for the next few years the history of these ventures is the history of large-scale ranching in Southern Alberta. Perhaps the most famous of these pioneer ranches was the Cochrane Ranch Company in which Senator Cochrane of Compton, P.Q. was interested. It was stocked in 1881, partly by herds trailed from Montana in a "drive" remarkable for the speed, the cruelty and the tremendous loss of stock which characterized it. This company's original lease lay west of Calgary, and its home ranch was at the Big Hill, near the present town of Cochrane. Misfortune dogged its early years and the headquarters was moved south in 1883 to another enormous lease near the American border in the Waterton Lakes country, although the northern lease was retained (8).

There were other well-known ranches stocked between 1882 and 1884, among them the Walrond Ranch in the Porcupine Hills, established by British capitalists, chief among them Sir John Walrond. This ranch was for

(8) Ibid. p. 158.

long managed by Dr. John McEachron, Dominion Chief Veterinarian, famous for his long and bitter feuds with settlers who endeavoured to squat on the "Waldron Lease" and ^{for} ~~A~~ his acrimonious exchanges with the Macleod "Gazette" (9). The Oxley Ranch on Willow Creek also gained a certain notoriety as a result of difficulties aforementioned. Perhaps one of the most famous Alberta ranches was that of the North-West Cattle Company, the Bar U, with its headquarters on Pekisko Creek. The Bar U was one of the most successful of the cattle companies, and was for long connected with the name of George Lane, one of Alberta's most noted stock-men.

A number of individual ranchers, with smaller leases, had established themselves ^{chiefly} ~~A~~ around Macleod, Pincher Creek and Calgary. ~~xxxxxx~~, ~~xxxxxxxx~~ By 1888 there was a sprinkling of settlers all along the foothills from Morley to Pincher Creek, as well as along the rivers. Almost without exception they were stockmen. By 1884 forty-one companies and individuals held 2,782,690 acres on lease chiefly along the foothills south of Calgary. Six of the lessees held 100,000 acres each; ten more held over 50,000 acres each. In 1885 at a conservative

(9) Kelly, p. 216.

estimate, there were on the ranges of Alberta and Assiniboia 46,936 cattle, 9694 sheep and 4313 horses (10). They were all on the open range for none of the leases had as yet been fenced (11).

~~Ranking *****~~ Until 1885 development was slow but the foundations were being laid for future progress. In 1881, the only year for which figures are available, the Census of Canada gave the population of Bow River (approximately the area under consideration) as 3275, of whom 2875 were Indians. The total land occupied was 32,562 acres of which 6,296 acres were improved. There were 63 occupiers of whom 60 were owners. By 1885 the increase of ranching had wrought a considerable change. The friction between settlers and lease-holders had already begun. "Prior to the amendment of the Dominion Lands Act in 1881 the squatters were protected on any land they had settled on so long as they did not prove to be (on) Hudson's Bay Lands" (12). When, however, as the result of survey, settlers found themselves on such lands, the Company could usually be persuaded to take better lands elsewhere as compensation. By the aforesaid

(10) Sessional papers (No. 13) 1885 Vol. XVIII
No. 7, p. 33.

(11) Diller, p. 89.

(12) Pearce, Ms. p.41.

amendment the Government was authorized not to recognize squatters on lands "which may have been set apart as railway land or for any other special purpose by the Governor-in-Council". Squatting before or after survey or without obtaining entry was afterwards prohibited. Usually squatters were generously treated but a good deal of friction did arise between lease-holders and squatters, for the regulations were not as clear-cut as they might have been.

As matters stood, although squatters could secure no title to lands included in a lease, they could remain there until the lease expired and then file; meanwhile the leaseholder had no legal power to expel them. The squatters who descended upon the choicest portions of the leases claimed to be bona fide homesteaders, i.e. cultivators, but most of them intended to become stockmen (13). Circumstances were ideal for the economical development of small stock-ranches. The squatter could, in the busy season, work for the lessee and earn the ready cash so necessary for the establishment of any new enterprise; the range cost him nothing; stray

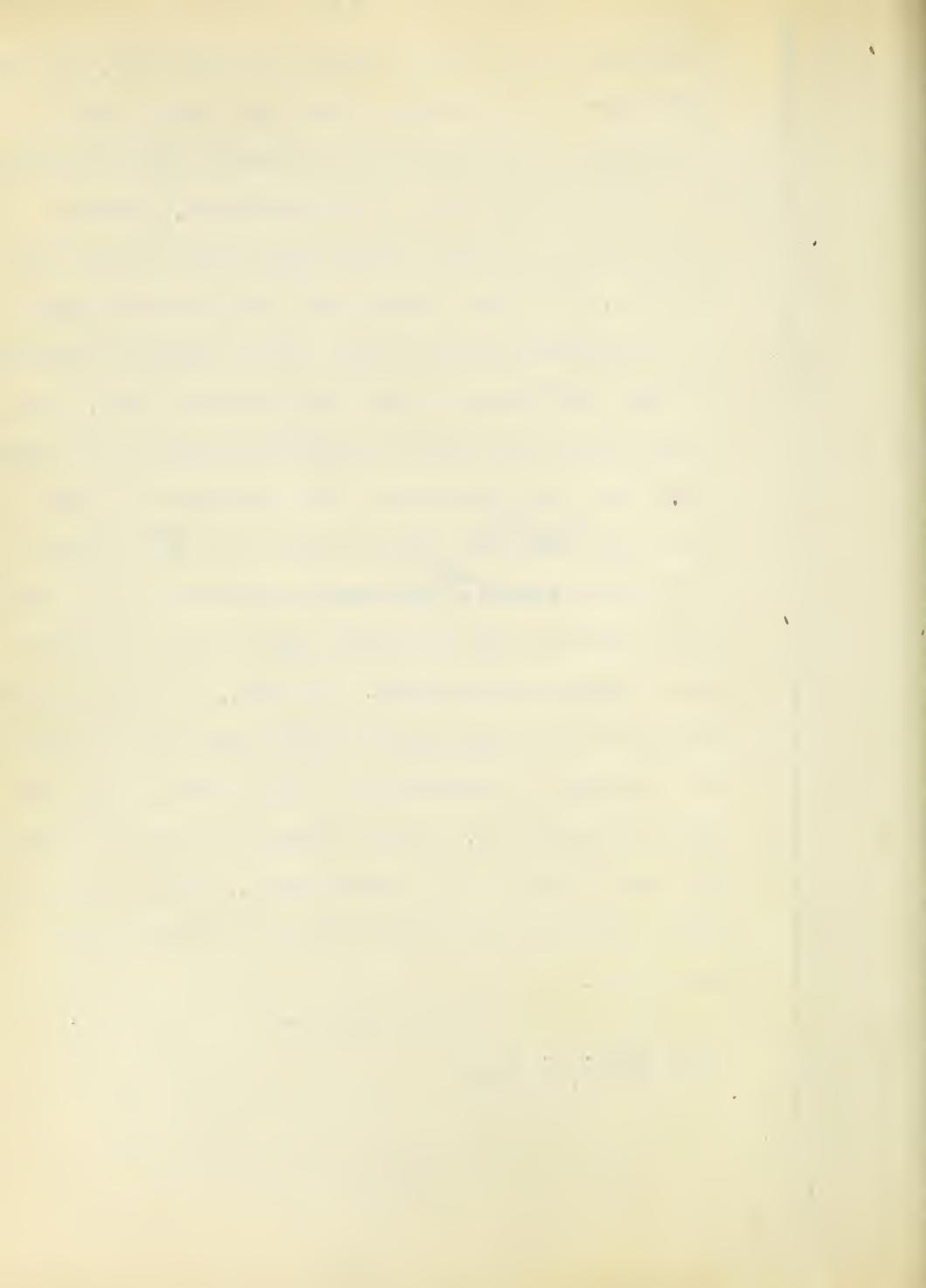
(13) Ibid. p. 41.

unbranded cattle could easily be picked up; and he would have the service of the best bulls (14).

Invariably these invaders of vested right squatted on springs and river or creek-bottoms, greatly injuring the general range capacity for water and shelter, for their fences cut off the open range on the benches beyond (15). It is doubtful whether genuine cultivators would have settled thus, for bench lands have proved generally superior to bottom lands for crop purposes. The squatters claimed *in the bottoms* that only ~~xxxx~~ was water available. ^{Even} ~~xx~~ so their settlement ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ^{was} inadvisable, for their small product did not equal that of the ranchers whose leases they ruined. In 1885, on the recommendation of William Pearce, large areas were reserved for purposes of watering and sheltering along the Belly, Bow and St. Mary's Rivers, a solution which was only temporarily satisfactory, since before long these reserves were thrown open to homesteading once more.

(14) Ibid. p. 41

(15) Kelly, p. 176.



(c) Development after the Railway, the "Golden Age," and the Decline of the Industry

With the coming of the railway the "Golden Age" of ranching began. The new land regulations of 1881 had made possible the establishment of large ranches; the railway provided an outlet for their products, beginning a period of great prosperity for the companies and individuals who held leases. At the same time the railway made inevitable the eventual decline of ranching as it was understood in 1885. Even before that date homesteaders' fences were cutting off the range from the water and shelter of the bottom-lands. Cultivation irrevocably destroyed the range, for once broken the prairie sod never recaptured its unique characteristics. Difficulties between homesteader and leaseholder continued unabated despite the watering reserves and the problems which faced the rancher did not find easier solution as more and more land was taken up.

Changes in lease policy aggravated an already vexed question. Ottawa began by having no policy at all; in 1881 it introduced regulations which apparently gave all the advantage to those who were fortunate enough to be able to secure and operate a large lease. Undoubtedly the government was well-advised in its introduction of a system which definitely restricted

the number of cattle to be maintained on the leases, instead of the Montana system which required the payment of a rental per head. Its aim, in which it succeeded, was to prevent the overstocking which had ruined the range grass in the Western states. However, to many small stockmen it seemed grossly unfair that they should be excluded from the choicest range merely because they lacked capital. Another complaint came from settlers, many of them in the towns, who wished to see a rapid increase in population, an increase for which the lease system did not provide. They demanded its complete abolition and were wholly in sympathy with the squatters.

The lease-system seems to have suited no one, except the companies. The townspeople thought that it checked the growth of population; those who wished to farm found themselves excluded from what they thought was the choicest land. The individual ranchers, many of whom held small leases but also depended upon the open range, found that the choicest areas were leased to the companies. E.H. Maunsell, an ex-Mounted Policeman and one of the pioneers who took their stock to Montana in 1879, and later the largest individual rancher in the West, testified

against them. The earliest settlers around Macleod, of whom he was one, discovered in 1881 that their lands had been leased and their rights even to land they had enclosed were in danger. He condemned the way in which many of the leases were granted to speculators who had no intention of stocking them, which had a disastrous effect on settlement. Otherwise the country would have been quickly filled up with a good class of small stockmen (16). The colossal size of the leases seems to have been the chief mistake; smaller leases of up to five thousand acres would have prevented the company monopolies which were established. The rigid enforcement of stocking regulations would have done a good deal to check speculation. With all its faults, the lease system did to some extent protect the rancher's interests against the flood of indiscriminate settlement.

The uncertainty of the lease regulations was extremely annoying to both parties. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ The lease holders were supposed to put the squatters off their leases but no legal procedure existed by which they could do so. If they did attempt to expel the squatters they risked almost certain

(16) Maunsell, E.H. "Memoirs" p.43-44.

unpopularity and the possibility of reprisals, for burning hay lands and trampled crops were frequent consequences of eviction (17). On the other hand, if they allowed squatters to remain, they were breaking a law themselves and they would be treated by the squatters as legitimate prey. The friction was incessant, for many lessees were willing to risk possible consequences, notable among them the Walrand and Oxley Ranches. Perhaps these lessees were ill-advised, for sometimes where cordial relations had been established, rancher and homesteader proved mutually helpful, the latter supplying the feed which the former required to carry their herds through the winters (18).

Although by 1885 ranching was firmly established as a prosperous industry, the ranchers had other problems besides the encroachments of settlement to face. The Indians remained a constant menace to the unprotected herds on the open range. They had first become troublesome in 1878 (19) when prairie fires had driven most of the remaining buffalo south into Montana. The treaty payments were quite inadequate

(17) Pearce, MSS. p. 41

(18) Kelly, p. 188

(19) Diller, p. 90.

to provide the Indians with food and they helped themselves to the ranchers' herds. The Police, as we have seen, were disinclined to deal too harshly with them, and the disgusted ranchers crossed the border to a land where a more rational concept of Indian policy prevailed. For the first few years Indian depredations continued to be a source of considerable loss but after 1888 the Police held them more rigidly in check (20) although ranchers still attributed their losses to Indians rather than to their own methods. Southern Alberta was undisturbed by the Riel Rebellion in 1885 for Crowfoot, the Blackfoot chief, kept his tribe passive. Indeed the ranchers profited, for their beef was purchased at excellent prices to feed the troops. !

Poor methods caused considerable loss among the herds. Inexperience and a touching faith in the Alberta climate were the roots of the trouble. The open range, with all its advantages, did not make for improvement of breed. Good cows and purebred bulls were imported, but as there was no way of preventing inter-breeding, the improvement to stock which should have resulted was negligible. The larger enterprises

(20) Kelly, p. 218.

were the leading importers of valuable stock for improvement purposes and they suffered from the inferior bulls which smaller concerns ran on the same ranges. The Cochrane Ranch, owing to the comparative isolation of its Kootenai lease, had the highest grade stock (21). A gradual deterioration of the Western breed took place, for not only was cross-breeding prevalent, but many inferior animals were brought in from Manitoba and the East as stockers, that is, young animals to be fattened on the Western ranges for market. Still worse were the consequences of the importation of Mexican stockers, which was common from 1902 to 1905 (22). Much of the stock brought in by American settlers was very poor. Alberta was rapidly becoming a feeding and fattening, rather than a breeding country. "Beef" ranchers, as those were called, who, like P. Burns and J.H. Wallace, bought cattle and turned them onto the range to fatten, were accused of cutting into the breeding strength of the herds by their demands for fat cows (23). Many men urged the adoption of policies which would bring Alberta to the same rank among breeding countries as she occupied among feeding countries, but while

(21) Kelly, p. 53

(22) Ibid., p. 55

(23) Ibid., p. 51-52.

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the open range remained, such policies demanded more self-denial and more co-operation than some of the stock men were willing to afford.

In spite of the limitations imposed, the open range led to overcrowding of the choicer ranges and the destruction of winter pasture. Fencing was the only way out and the practice gradually increased after 1885. In the next twenty years the open range almost disappeared. Fencing such large areas was expensive and only the wealthier ranches could at first afford to enclose areas sufficiently large to be useful. Their fences were viewed with considerable displeasure by those who had profited by the large rancher's losses and sabotage was not uncommon. The first considerable wire fence was that built to enclose the Cochrane Ranch's Kootenai Range in 1885. Twenty-five miles long, stretching from the Old Man River to the Porcupine Hills, it lasted a very short time. The open range was dying hard (24).

The first ranchers were unfortunately convinced that it was possible to winter stock on the Alberta ranges without putting up extra feed. In normal ✓ winters it was possible for a ranch to come through

(24) Kelly, p. 190.

a winter on such terms with a comparatively small loss, chiefly among weak cows and early calves. In exceptionally hard winters, however, such as that of 1886-87, the losses were heavy. According to Kelly the losses that winter approximated 25% in the Calgary district, from 50% to 60% from the Highwood River to the Old Man River, 20% to 25% in the Pincher Creek area, and 50% in the Medicine Hat region. There were however occasional ranges where the losses were small (25). According to Mounted Police records, losses that winter averaged about 15% (26). *In spite of the discrepancy, losses were heavy* Lessons of this sort were too expensive to be ignored and the folly of relying entirely on winter pasturage in the open was recognized. However, outdoor feeding remained universal, the wisdom of which course was proved by experiments later conducted by the ~~Government~~ ^{at Brandon} Experimental Farm ~~to~~ to test the relative merit of indoor and outdoor feeding. After 1887 it became the general practice to put up considerable hay for the winter, and in some cases considerable tame hay and other fodder was raised on the home ranch.

(25) Kelly, p. 201

(26) Diller, p. 92.

In this connection some men, among them John R. Craig(27) and A.M. Burgess, Deputy Minister of the Interior,(28) saw possibilities for the reconciliation of the apparently conflicting interests of rancher and farmer. The latter, Craig thought, could devote himself to raising winter feed for the rancher, who could use for grazing lands useless to the cultivator. Mutual benefit to both parties would result and the bitterness which existed between the two parties would disappear in the reciprocal advantages of the scheme.

The deterioration of the Montana ranges during the early eighties as a result of successive droughts, caused a suspicious drift of American cattle across the International Boundary, a circumstance which if unchecked could lead only to the overcrowding and ultimate destruction of the Southern Alberta ranges. Fencing the boundary, the surest cure, involved too much expense for the industry of the eighties and it was necessary for both Alberta ranchers and the Mounted Police to patrol the border and drive back American cattle. American ranchers were indeed

(27) Craig, "Ranching with Lords and Commons" pp.236 et seq.

(28) Kelly, p. 168.

suspected of gently encouraging their cattle in a northerly direction, a suspicion which threatened permanently to poison the happy relations which had heretofore existed between ranchers on opposite sides of the International line. The overcrowding of the Montana range caused the wholesale ~~importation~~ ^{ex}portation of rather poor stock from that region, and the Canadian Government in 1886 imposed a duty of 20% on American cattle (29). Previously lease-holders had been privileged to bring cattle across duty free. Henceforth the prevention of "drifting" became a matter for police and customs officers and a good many more or less bitter border "incidents" occurred. Although "drifting" continued after 1886 it became less common for many American ranches paid the duty and moved their herds north (30).

/ Prairie fires perpetually menaced the ranches. Almost without warning they could, with remarkable rapidity, sweep across miles of range, destroying feed, stock and buildings in their path. Usually they were the consequence of the carelessness of Indians or of the settlers themselves but sometimes sparks from passing railway locomotives set the prairies alight. Not until 1895 did the C.P.R.

(29) Diller, p. 94

(30) Kelly, pp. 340, 353.

begin ploughing fire-guards along the tracks. As the unfenced tracks were death-traps for unsophisticated live-stock, and as railway land-grants and high freight rates were fruitful sources of discontent, the popularity of the railway company was not unqualified (31). Sometimes the prairie fires were said to be of incendiary origin and irate ranchers, who had just seen their precious range destroyed, accused recalcitrant squatters of setting out the fires. The authorities as well as the ranchers were keenly alive to the importance of prevention. "This is a matter which is probably at present of more importance to the Territories than any other."

"If the occurrence of these fires could be prevented for even four or five years such an improvement would be apparent in certain portions of the country that they would hardly be identified" (32).

The report recommended the establishment of volunteer fire-brigades such as existed in the Mormon settlement at Lee's Creek (Cardston). The lack of organization of this sort made fire-fighting extremely difficult. The fires were regarded as a Police

(31) Kelly, pp. 20 et seq.

(32) Sessional Papers 1891, Paper 17 No. 2, Pt. 1, p. 12

responsibility and many settlers were diffident, as long as their own possessions were not endangered, in helping to extinguish what they regarded as providential judgments against the sins of the lease-holders. In the face of widespread indifference and universal carelessness, police and ranchers strove in vain, while fires continued annually to levy large tolls.

Timber wolves in the foothill region took considerable toll of the young stock (33). In 1893 they were said to have caused heavier losses than did the severity of the weather. In spite of many petitions neither the Dominion nor the Territorial government would offer a bounty. Eventually the organized ranchmen offered one in the early nineties, and the Territorial Government one in 1893, so that a considerable reduction in their numbers ensued, until by 1914 the danger had become relatively unimportant.

The relation between Government and ranching ✓ community was seldom a very happy one. Governmental procrastination in the matter of brands, which were essential to the open range system, was a standing grievance. By Ordinance No. 17 of 1883 of the North-

(33) Dept. of Interior Reports 1893 p. 24

West Territories, provision had been made for the erection of stock districts, the registration of brands and vent marks and for transfer of brands, etc., and penalties imposed for the use of someone else's brand and for marking of stock belonging to others. Not, however, until 1887 was it provided that "The presence of a recorded brand on any animal shall be *prima facie* evidence of the ownership of such animal by the owner of such brand" (34). Under previous circumstances it had been almost impossible to establish theft, and the confusion consequent — was most irritating to honest men. The Government similarly ignored the need for stock inspectors, until in 1897 the Territorial Department of Agriculture took over the business of brands and appointed inspectors of brands and stock (35).

The disposal of mavericks, as unbranded animals found on the range were called, was another matter which needed government regulation. Unless ownership was claimed and proven the stock associations were in the habit of selling mavericks during general round-ups, and of turning the proceeds into the

(34) Ordinance No. 10 of 1887

(35) Ordinance No. 23 of 1897 (N.W.T.).

general funds of the association. As many of the mavericks were members of escaped small fenced herds, the smaller stock-men protested (36). Efforts by the association to have their practice legalized were unsuccessful and after a number of suits against persons acting in the interests of the associations which resulted in decisions adverse to the latter, the practice was discontinued (37).

Southern Alberta's felicitous climate preserved her stock, as it did later her wheat, from serious attack by disease. Her good fortune in this respect was further assured by the policy of careful supervision adopted from the beginning by the Dominion Department of Agriculture. "In 1884 a policy of veterinary inspection and quarantine was adopted in regard to cattle imported from the Western States. The quarantine regulations were altered in 1887 and 1888, and again in 1892, becoming more restrictive with each change" (38). The attacks of mange did at one time late in the period threaten to become serious. The disease first appeared in the Lethbridge district. It had probably entered from the United States and it spread rapidly throughout

(36) Keely p. 383

(37) Ibid. pp. 302, 346-47.

(38) Diller, p. 96.

Southern Alberta. "Thanks to the efforts of the Alberta Stock Growers' Association of the Southern District, dipping stations were established throughout that district"(39). This treatment and the rigid enforcement of quarantine regulations, had by 1902 almost eradicated the disease, although another serious outbreak occurred between the years 1905 and 1907. Failure to co-operate was partially responsible and once more a divergence appeared between the policies of large and small ranches. The large ranches were foremost in the movement for prevention, since they were well able to afford a comparatively small outlay to prevent considerable losses. The smaller interests with less at stake were willing to risk foregoing preventative methods in order to save operating expenses. On the open range the cattle of both parties came into contact, and the usual friction ensued, the large ranchers accusing the smaller men of using their superior voting strength to force political interference with the prevention of mange (40).

The historic divergence between the interests of

(39) *Ibid.* p. 97

(40) Kelly, p. 47.

sheep-men and cattle ranchers was an ever-present difficulty on the Alberta ranges, one indeed which has persisted there and elsewhere to the present day. Although the feud never achieved the violent extremities of those in the United States, bitterness was seldom absent. Sheep were brought in during the early eighties and from the first conflict arose as they crop grass very close to the ground and ruin cattle range for about two years. The Dominion Government, cutting the Gordian knot, prohibited the grazing of sheep on Dominion lands. This proving too restrictive, in 1882 certain areas were set aside for sheep. They were not allowed to range from the boundary on the south to the Highwood River and the North Fork of the Bow on the north, and from the summit of the Rockies on the west to the eastern boundary of the District of Alberta on the east (41). This regulation remained in force until 1893 but apparently there was no certainty in the matter (42). In 1893 the grazing of sheep was forbidden in Alberta west of Calgary and Edmonton Railway, the Bow, Belly and St. Mary's Rivers, and south to the Boundary.

(41) Annual Report Dept. of the Interior 1885 p 32.

(42) Diller, p. 98.

The region bounded by the Belly and St. Mary's on the west, the South Saskatchewan on the north, the western boundary of Assiniboia on the east and the international line on the south was set aside for sheep. Elsewhere a permit for sheep grazing from the Minister of Agriculture was necessary. Another alteration was made in 1903 when four areas in Alberta and Saskatchewan were set aside for sheep grazing. In spite of these frequent alterations no one was ever quite satisfied. Government regulations to be efficient required enforcement and it appears that laxity prevented any benefits which might have been derived.

No survey of the ranching industry could be complete without some treatment of the Stock Associations.^M Ranching in the days of the open range would have been impossible without co-operation between the ranchers, since no effort was made to hold the cattle on their own lease. The Quorn cattle from Sheep Creek, for example, ranged south to the Forks of the South Saskatchewan, even to the border. Until the advent of fences the only limit to the cattle's travels was set by the rivers. Breeding stock were usually held on the home range by means of line-riders but the rest of the herd was free to drift. Impossible confusion was

prevented by the association of ranchers who combined to hold the semi-annual round-ups. The associations were also a convenient method of bringing the interests of the ranching class before the government and gave to the cattle interests a solidarity which the homesteaders never possessed.

The first association, called the South-Western Stock Association, was formed at Macleod in April, 1883, for the mutual protection of stock-owners (43). Among its members were most of the prominent cattle-men in Southern Alberta. Matters of general interest were discussed; the driving of stock across other ranges, round-ups and stock laws, and The various ranges were determined, Kootenai, Pincher Creek, Kipp, Willow Creek and High River. Rewards were offered for information leading to convictions for cattle killing, horse stealing and ^{setting out} prairie fires.

Separate associations were formed in the Calgary, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat districts. By 1887 the district organizations had merged into two large associations, one for the north and one for the south, of which the more influential was the Alberta Stock

(43) Macleod Gazette, April 14, 1883.

Growers' Association with its headquarters at Macleod. By 1889 its vigour had declined. Also, ranchers in the northern district had begun an agitation for a new and more extensive organization with its headquarters in Calgary. As the centre of gravity of the industry tended to shift northward, the demand was realized by 1898 in the Live Stock Growers' Association, which embraced all the district organizations and had its headquarters at Calgary (44).

✓The associations were never dominated by the cattle companies and leaseholders although they were very influential. The associations were rather the organizations of those who were primarily interested in live stock rather than in grain growing. As organizations they were able to exert more influence than as individuals and if conflicting interests were not too ^{they were} strong, usually successful in obtaining their demands. They obtained among other things the restrictions on sheep-grazing, the mange regulations, and numerous minor but necessary changes in lease regulations. If they did not check ~~unrestricted~~ immigration they at least helped to control it.

Their most important service was the control of the

open range, which has been mentioned. The various ranchers, large and small, who held leases or owned land in a certain range district, worked together on the round-up, each ranch sending representatives. Their range was combed for stock which was gathered together and held. The stock belonging to the participating ranchers was separated from the strays which were handed over to the proper representatives from other ranges. Round-ups were held twice a year, in the spring for branding, etc., and in the fall for the selection of animals for sale. The latter was called the "beef-roundup." One man for every five hundred head was the rule at the roundups, and the smaller ranchers worked with the large ones, who provided the chuck-wagon and other equipment. Although the practice weighed heavily on the rancher who owned under five hundred head, it was generally satisfactory. Without the co-operation which the Associations made possible, ranching in the grand manner would have caused endless confusion, even local wars.

"The growth of cattle-ranching in Southern Alberta can best be studied in connection with the development of markets" (45). As we have seen, before

the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the product of Alberta ranches was absorbed locally. The immediate effect of the arrival of the railway at Calgary in 1883 and the inauguration of a trans-continental service in 1886, was the opening to the ranching industry of the markets of the outside world. The first shipments of Alberta cattle were to Manitoba and the Eastern Provinces; in 1886 shipments began to Great Britain and in 1890 to British Columbia. The latter market did not become important until the building of the Crow's Nest Pass Railway in 1897 ~~made accessible the mining market.~~

The increase in the number of cattle on the range in Southern Alberta is shown by the following estimates, admittedly conservative, from the Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Grazing and Timber Lands:

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Cattle</u>
1885.....	46,936
1886.....	74,999
1887.....	101,382
1888.....	108,361
1889.....	106,968
1890.....	117,659
1891.....	121,116
1892.....	129,283

(After 1892 no separate estimates are available for range cattle).

From 1885 to 1892 the ranching industry was steadily advancing, in spite of the encroachment of

agricultural settlement. In 1892 the British embargo upon Canadian cattle caused a severe depression which lasted until the building of the Crows' Nest Pass Railway opened the mining market of British Columbia. Previously, all range cattle shipped to Great Britain had been fattened there; the new regulations ordered immediate slaughter. In poor condition, thin and bruised, Alberta cattle could not wait for favourable markets. Average prices for Canadian steers in the English market dropped from \$50.00 to \$35.00. Nevertheless Western shipments continued to grow (46).

The embargo increased the importation of stockers, most of which were shipped to Great Britain, and an agitation for a larger dead-meat trade which led to the establishment by P. Burns of an abattoir and cold-storage plant at Calgary in 1899 (47). After 1898 the British Columbia market increased and prices improved. About 1897 a considerable trade with the United States in stockers had arisen. Exports of Western beef continued to increase yearly but by 1914 most of it came from the farms and smaller ranches. The output of the few remaining large ranches decreased

(46) Diller, p. 101

(47) Ibid. p. 102.

each year as the open range dwindled

The changing lease regulations reflected the government's changing attitude toward the development of the West. In 1881 it had seemed desirable to encourage the capitalist who was willing to invest in the ranching industry. The railway, after 1885, demanded a more thickly-populated hinterland than a ranching country could provide. The railways encouraged immigration, and the government, always sensitive to railway pressure, encouraged immigration too. From the West itself, from the people and from the press, from visiting scientist and resident speculator, came the cry for people. It was an age of colonization, of agricultural settlement, and the leases could not for long resist the relentless plough. Even in 1884, the year the railway reached Calgary, two thousand settlers came to Alberta (48). In 1885 all even-numbered sections of leases granted subsequent to that date, were thrown open for homestead, preemption or sale, such entry or purchase rendering the grazing lease void. All leases granted thereafter were subject to cancellation upon two years' notice. Cancellations were begun in this year for non-payment

of rent and the rental was doubled "in view of the success of the industry and the great demand for grazing lands" (49).

In 1887 it was ordered that henceforth, with certain exemptions, leases were to be issued only after public competition. In response to a memorial in 1886 from the organized ranchers, demanding more effective protection for lease-holders, the government took action. In 1888 the number of acres per head of cattle was raised to twenty. The Associations of ranchers were asked to name cases in which unsuitable leases were obtained with the intention of finding subsistence for cattle on leases of others and lessees were forbidden to homestead lands on lease-holds belonging to others. By 1888 a great many leases were being cancelled and no new ones were granted in Alberta although a few assignments of holdings were made.

In 1889 the regulations were consolidated and improved from an administrative point of view. The first mention now occurs of any ban on grazing stock on the public domain without the permission of the Minister of the Interior. "The grazing of same will

render them liable to seizure and forfeiture by the owner" (50). This was for the protection of the lease-holler, but it must have annoyed the rancher who for economy's sake had allowed his lease to be cancelled for non-payment of rent and was now excluded from the open range. This regulation does not appear to have been rigidly enforced, although the Associations prevented the homesteaders from making free use of the range for which the lease-holders paid.

During 1890 and 1891 many leases were cancelled and few new leases were granted. Revenues from grazing lands decreased. "This decrease was partly caused by some of the leases of the largest ranches having been cancelled for non-payment of rent. The total number of ranches is increasing every year, but the areas leased are becoming much smaller than in former years. During the last year no ranch disposed of by the Department exceeded an area of 3000 acres" (51).

Times were changing. In 1892 the Report of a Special Committee appointed to consider various matters relating to the District of Alberta embodied the following significant passages:

"That owing to the growing settlements in the

(50) Order-in-Council Sept. 17, 1889.

(51) Report of Dept. of the Interior, 1893, p.

grazing districts, a change is desirable, both in the existing leases and in the system of grazing lands. The existence of a large number of grazing leases is a great obstacle to the settlement of an important part of Alberta. The enormous acreage covered by these leases is altogether out of proportion to the actual needs of the lease-holders.

"While admitting the existence of certain vested rights in the leaseholders, it must not be forgotten that valuable privileges have been granted to them, under a policy which is now (sic.) clearly detrimental to the best interests of the country, upon conditions which, in the majority of cases, have not been fulfilled by them. Public policy and convenience now demand the earliest possible throwing open for settlement of large portions of the country now covered by grazing leases, and the government....will be justified in using every means in their power, not inconsistent with good faith, to bring about that result....

"Hereafter the settlement of the country should be the first consideration of the government.... ✓

"The Committee believe that the policy of the government in regard to the grazing lease system has been largely due to mistaken ideas on the agricultural capacity of Southern Alberta....it is a matter of

regret that false and unfavourable impressions have been persistently created and spread abroad...."(52).

The Dominion Government had already been considering action. In December 1891 it had sent a circular to the lease-holders. In view of the demand for lands for settlement and to satisfy the railway subsidies which could be expected to follow the construction of the railway line between Calgary and Fort Macleod, and wishing not to disturb unnecessarily the ranching industry, the Government proposed "to offer all those lessees who....have....complied with the requirements of their leases, the privilege of purchasing ten per cent of the area of their lease-holds at \$2 per acre, provided they accept for the residue of the term a lease of the lands now held by them on the new form, which provides for the withdrawal from time to time of lands as they are required for sale or railway purposes."

In 1892 new regulations were set forth. The lessees were informed that their leases would be terminated on September 31, 1896. They could then, or during the interval, purchase not more than ~~ten~~ percent of their leasehold at \$2,00 per acre if they would accept open

(52) Journals of the 2nd Legislative Assembly of the North-West Territories, 1st session 10/12/91 to 25/1/92 pp. 62 et seq.

leases for the remainder of their leased lands for the unexpired portion of the twenty-one years (53). By 1895 all except nine of the old leases—about 523,000 acres—had been relinquished and after 1894 no new leases of over 6000 acres were applied for for some time. The old ranch was dead; all that remained was the winding up of the estate.

With the adoption of the new regulations we pass * from the first phase of ranching into the second. Even in 1893 the price of land sold to leaseholders had been reduced to \$1.25 an acre and public competition for leases abolished, as no large leases had been applied for within the last two or three years. The total number of ranches and the total area leased steadily increased after 1896. "As a rule (new) lessees are settlers who acquire limited tracts....in the neighbourhood of their homesteads." By 1896 all the old leases had been finally terminated but the majority of the holders had purchased considerable areas of land. ✓ Between 1896 and 1905 the area leased increased from 257,983 acres to 2,328,113 acres and the number of ranches from 236 to 745. In 1914 there were 1916 ranches covering 4,480,802 acres, of which 2,402,622 acres were in Alberta—more land was leased than had

(53) Order in Council October 12, 1892.

ever been leased in the "Golden Age".

The form of the ranch had changed. Before 1895 the ranch was typically a lease, and frequently a large lease. After 1895 the large ranches acquired great areas of deeded land from the government and from the railways, and held less land on lease. The many small ranches which were established had a smaller area of deeded land and a small lease. There were large leases but they were exceptional. After 1895 the small ranch was typical of the industry as before that date the great holdings of the companies had been typical.

Old and new ranches alike depended on the open range. The rancher was inclined, for reasons of economy, to pay rent on as ~~small a~~ ^{small a} ~~lease~~ ^{hold} as possible. While the open ^{range} ~~remained~~ ^A and regulations as to stocking were not rigidly enforced, from a comparatively small headquarters he could use a large area. The new regulations in themselves would have made little difference, but they were the outward sign of settlement. The rapid increase of settlement which could not be absorbed by the ranching economy, made inevitable the transition from a pastoral to an agricultural economy. Gradually after 1884 the ploughed field replaced the open range.

Settlement spread out around the centres of Macleod and Calgary, clinging to the friendly valleys of the foothills. It seemed unwilling to take the plunge into the prairies and the areas east of the present Calgary-Macleod railway remained untouched. Population and farming operations advanced together. Between 1881 and 1891 the population of Southern Alberta had increased from 3275 ~~xxxix~~ (the sub-district of Bow River—2875 Indians) to 18,402 (the sub-districts of Calgary with Red Deer and Macleod) (54). Improved land had increased only from 1945 acres (56) to 26,313 acres (55). Evidently in this decade most of the settlers were stockmen rather than farmers.

The development of dry-farming methods sealed the ✓ fate of the last stronghold of the ranching industry. Although in the eighties settlement and cultivation alike had clung to the rivers and creeks, they began after 1890 to push back into the benches and prairies of the hinterland. Fences appeared where they had previously been unknown. By 1905 the lands around Lethbridge had been fenced within a radius of twenty-five miles of the town (57). The block surveys,

(54) Census of Canada 1891

(55) Ibid

(56) Kelly, p. 252

(57) Kelly, p. 265

unnoticeable in an unfenced and undivided land, where "trails" followed the way of least resistance rather than a rectilinear "Road-allowance", became more and more visible in their geometrical exactitude. Southern Alberta was changing, changing more radically than it had even in the early eighties, for the new dispensation was altering irrevocably the physical make-up of the land.

Through the nineties and until 1905 the ranches survived on the dwindling range and stock-raising remained the leading industry. When in 1906 the Cochrane Ranch Company sold its southern holdings, purchased outright during the nineties, to the Mormon settlers for \$3,128,000 the old era seemed dead at last; the luckless company had made one of the most profitable speculations in Alberta's history. The ranches survived but were greatly changed. They were smaller; more of their land was privately owned; generally the owners were resident and managed their ^(ranches) themselves and fewer men were employed. Usually a much larger proportion of its area was devoted to crops or to tame hay for "finishing" its stock (58). Above all there was no longer any open range. It was

(58) Kelly, p. 382.

however, still a ranch, in the sense that its focal point of production was livestock, usually cattle. More properly it should have been called a "stock-farm" but as the owners preferred the title, it was called a ranch. Economically it was a large mixed farm, with the production of stock as its principal feature.

By 1906 the ranch had been absorbed into the general agricultural fabric of the Province of Alberta and our interest in it as an economic entity declines. As a social unit it remains for our purposes of considerable interest, for it was on these "new" ranches that the life of the "old" survived and developed, not quite apart from the rest of the province, but sufficiently distant until 1914 to merit separate consideration. Wherever the wheat-farmer had not penetrated or could not penetrate the ranchers remained. Along the foothills of the Rockies, in the dry lands north of Medicine Hat, along the valleys of the Bow, the Red Deer and the Milk Rivers, in the Cypress, Porcupine and Wintering Hills, the ranchers carried on the business they had adopted, or lived the life which they preferred, secure from the invasion of the despised "dirt farmer."

Settlement proceeded indiscriminately, and without scientific direction as was the custom in a new country in those unenlightened days. The object was to put settlers on the land; after that, the Deluge, or, as in Southern Alberta, the drought. From the beginning of the century, settlement of the Prairie Provinces continued until some indeterminate point in the middle twenties, when farm abandonment began to assume alarming proportions. One of the last strongholds of the rancher, "the semi-arid plains (of south-eastern Alberta) were thrown open to homesteading in 1909. Settlement was extremely rapid in 1910 and 1911. Ranching gave way to settlement"(59). Unfortunately here as elsewhere settlement followed no scientific plan and it has since appeared that such hurried and unregulated settlement is inevitably pregnant with unpleasant consequences. Just what will happen is a matter of considerable moment to Alberta and it has been frequently suggested that a renaissance of ranching would be a panacea for the problems of the southern part of the province. The remarks of a scientific observer, who has carefully studied the situation, are interesting in this connection. He is

(59) Prairie Settlement: The Geographical Setting, by W. A. Mackintosh, p. 125.

referring specifically to the Dry Belt of the prairie plains, of which Southern Alberta forms a part.

"There are in this section many acres in which inferior soil and topography render wheat-growing a less effective use of land than grazing, if an adequate water-supply is available. Ranching may be expected to increase and the re-settlement of certain areas should be prevented, but there is no possibility that over any large proportion of the semi-arid plains of Canada ranching will supplant grain-farming.

"Permanent settlement of the dry belt will probably be advanced in three ways. First, as markets expand some increase in the irrigated areas may be expected. Secondly, areas less favoured in topography and soil but better watered will turn more strongly to grazing. Thirdly, grain growing with improved rotations and improved tillage, larger enterprises with sufficient capital to average the good years with the bad, will use the better soils and the better topography. Unless development is carefully watched and controlled there may be much wasteage of capital and human effort while the proper adaption to facts of geography is being achieved" (60).

(60) Mackintosh p. 135.

The future of the ranching industry is fairly pictured here. It will never again dominate the Alberta scene but having served its pioneer purpose, will find its place in the agricultural organization of the West. Its place will be permanent and assured, a place dictated not by arbitrary settlement but by scientific decision, a proper adaption to facts of geography.

Note on Horse Ranching in Alberta.

It has been convenient to deal with the ranching industry from the point of view of the cattle-rancher. Actually, although cattle were of overwhelming importance, a considerable horse and sheep ranching industry existed in Southern Alberta. Horse-ranching developed parallel to cattle ranching, to which the horse was indispensable. It required the same necessities, faced the same problems and declined before the same forces. Most of the ranchers dealt in both cattle and horses although the emphasis was usually on the former.

Indian ponies were the earliest horses in Alberta and the Mounted Police brought in the first "White Man's Horses". Christy and Emerson brought in the first horses for sale in separate bands in 1876 and found a good market at Fort Macleod, receiving for some an average of \$100 apiece (61). Many of them went to the police. Indeed the first stimulus received by the industry was the demand for police "remounts." The government established farms at various points for breeding-purposes and settlers also raised remounts but the local supply did not nearly equal the demand.

(61) Kelly, p. 118.

As in the cattle business the early eighties was a period of considerable activity in horse-ranching. Several ranches were established by British capitalists with the intention of breeding cavalry horses for the British army. The Military Colonization Company's ranch on the Bow below Calgary was a pioneer. It was established by General Strange as a training school for English officers who wished to ranch. The Quorn ranch, established on the south side of Sheep creek by a group of hunting magnates from Leicestershire, had a chequered career. "The Quorn" imported some excellent Irish hunters, but mismanagement led to its decline. The High River Horse Ranch and the Bow River Horse Ranch were other well-known ventures. Many of these imported excellent breeding stock which has left an indelible mark on blood-stock in Alberta. Considerable success was achieved. Unfortunately the British market failed and fine animals were sold for almost nothing and used for sad purposes.

The industry languished during its first years, then revived in 1886 and developed rapidly for the next two years. In 1886 the number of horses in the Calgary and Macleod districts was estimated at from seven to ten thousand (62). A good many horses, (62) Diller, p. 109

including much poor stock, were imported from Oregon, British Columbia and Ontario. By 1888 the number of horses in Southern Alberta had risen to 23,868, of which many must have been of good quality, since in this year the Mounted Police obtained all their remounts in the Territories (63).

Until 1891 the quality of Alberta horses appears to have deteriorated, owing to inferior importations, and in that year only 100 remounts were obtained. The depression which affected the cattle-trade was general. Added to effect upon the market for horses was the increase in power transport. This eliminated the large demand which had existed for inferior animals for use on street-cars (64). Many horse-ranchers sold out and went into the cattle-business. The Yukon gold-rush in 1898 provided a market for pack-ponies and saddle-horses, and prices rose considerably. It was a golden opportunity to dispose of inferior stock at good prices and start afresh. Unfortunately the tendency was to continue breeding poor animals while such excellent prices prevailed.

A number of ranchers, after 1898 when settlement had become considerable, began raising work-horses

(63) Diller, p. 109

(64) Kelly, p. 282

for which there was a steady demand. Although the Boer War (1899-1902) caused a last revival in the saddle-horse trade, ^{the disappearance of the open range} ~~the disappearance of the open range~~ meant inevitable doom to horse-ranching on a large scale. A few horses remained on the range, some were bred on the farms for work purposes and the "new" ranchers raised a number of horses, both light and heavy, some excellent stock among them. The quality was not generally high in spite of the efforts of breeders to improve the stock. In 1914 good horses were comparatively rare in Alberta, although a fair demand still existed.

Note on Sheep Ranching

A very brief treatment of the sheep-ranching industry in Alberta will be adequate in this thesis. The ranchers, who could without conscientious scruple raise both horses and cattle, always regarded sheep as alien intruders on the range. The prejudice was strongest among American cattle-men, but only a few of the British ranchers *could bring themselves* to combine the ownership of sheep with their other interests. Among the minority, however, were some of the most prominent, for example E.H. Maunsell and W.S. Huckvale.

Attempts to breed sheep on a large scale on the Alberta range began during the early eighties by sheepmen, chiefly Americans, who brought in herds from Montana and Wyoming. The industry suffered from the regulations which prohibited the grazing of sheep in the best range areas. The first sheep were a wool type, but mutton proving more profitable an attempt was made to increase the weight of the carcass. By 1885 there were about 100,000 sheep on the range (65) but the restrictions caused a decline and sheep almost vanished from the land until an

(65) Diller, p. 112

improvement set in after 1890. In that year there were about 45,000 sheep on the range, chiefly in Assiniboia.

An outbreak of scab in 1893 caused an embargo by Great Britain on Canadian sheep and the industry shared the general depression which was dispersed in 1898 by the opening of the British Columbia market. About 1899 considerable improvement began and sheep ranching became very profitable. Number and quality increased. In 1901 there were 134,152 sheep in Alberta and Assiniboia and about 70,000 in the Lethbridge district. Sheep-ranching suffered the same fate as cattle and horse ranching and by 1905, except for a few isolated cases, was at an end. The tradition of ranching had been largely attached to the raising of horses and cattle, and those ranchers were more tenacious of their hold on the country's imagination. There were few "new" sheep-ranches. Without resistance, the sheep were absorbed into the mixed farming economy and left little trace of their existence as range stock.

VI--THE RANCHING TRADITION AND THE LIFE OF THE RANCHERS

The preceding sections of this thesis are an attempt to explain the development of the ranching industry and to describe the problems which it faced. Ranching was a necessary stage in the agricultural life of the Province and it remains the best method of utilizing much land unsuitable for cultivation. As it was in 1885, it remains to-day, an essential aspect of Alberta's economic fabric. —

In the United States the ranching community developed a folk-lore, a tradition and ^a way of life which has been profitably absorbed into the national culture. If we examine the history of everyday things in Southern Alberta we may find evidences of a similar contribution by the ranching community there to the Canadian culture. To facilitate such [✓] examination, an enquiry into the origins of the community, a discussion of its daily life and an analysis of the relations between the ranch and the various social influences and between the ranch and the rest of the community, should be helpful.

(a) The National Origins of the Ranchers.

There are no detailed statistics as to the national origin of the ranchers in Southern Alberta until 1901. There is available information as to the population of that district as a whole. By the Census of Canada for 1881, the sub-district of Bow River, approximately the area under consideration, had a population of 3275 ~~people~~, of whom 180 were English in origin, 100 were French and the remainder Indian. The small white population was made up of the Police, a few traders and a very few settlers who had small stock-farms or herds of stock, chiefly in the vicinity of the Police posts. The sixty-three occupiers of land may be regarded as the representatives in 1881 of the ranching community.

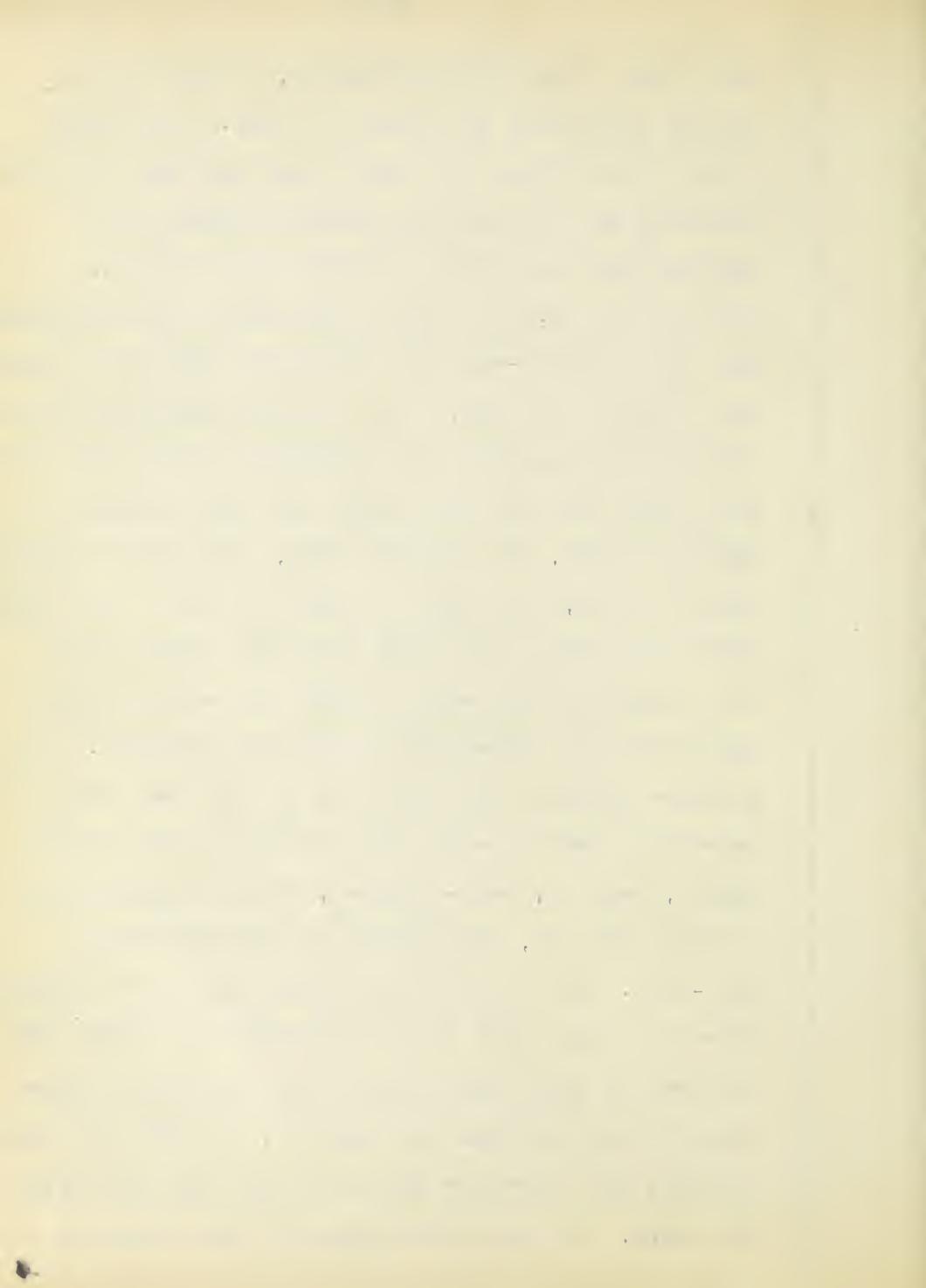
By the census of 1890-91 the population of the districts of Calgary, with Red Deer, and Macleod had risen to 18,402. In the whole Provisional District of Alberta, 18,717 were of Canadian birth (11,595 of whom were born in the North-West Territories), 4,365 of British, and 1,251 of American birth, and 944 belonged to other nationalities. Until 1901 the census reports are of little value for our purpose,

as figures are given either for the Provisional District of Alberta or for the North-West Territories. As the ranching community was only a portion of these units it is necessary to rely upon the testimony of early settlers and upon inferences which may be drawn from available books and documents dealing in whole or in part with the ranching country.

The first white settlers, or more properly, residents, in Southern Alberta were the traders and missionaries. The country was a preserve of the free-traders, mostly Americans, who had drifted in from the neighboring territories and states. The first missionaries to settle down were the MacDougalls who were established by 1870 at Morleyville on the northern edge of the range country. After the Mounted Police arrived in 1874, settlement increased. A number of the traders remained and a few farmers came into the country to supply the Force. The new lease regulations of 1881 greatly stimulated settlement in spite of their alleged effect upon it. Indeed it is from 1881 that the population begins to assume its eventual composition.

More than any other agency the Mounted Police influenced the complexion of early settlement in Southern Alberta. Many members of the force, after

their term of service had expired, settled in the country which they had helped to open. The makeup of the force during its early years has been frequently described and its retiring members stamped their impress upon the country in which they settled. Letters and visits to their homes gave free advertisement to the South-west and attracted still more young men of their own type. They in turn influenced their friends and relatives until Southern Alberta was filled with young men from the middle and upper classes of ✓ Eastern Canada, the British Isles, and even the Eastern United States, who found or hoped to find in the less restricted life of the West a welcome escape from the prosperous but rather stuffy life which several generations of commercial success had produced. To Southern Alberta came the young men who have been ✓ generally credited with the building of the British Empire, healthy, well-educated, usually possessed of a little capital, adventurous and devastatingly well-bred. Men of the same variety coming to Southern Alberta to-day might find it difficult to credit the fascination which that land exerted upon the younger sons of the seventies and eighties; in 1874 the virgin prairies and inviolate mountains must have had their own charm. It was for the time the last frontier



and not, for a last frontier, unattractive.

The peculiar instinct which leads young Britons to remote and unlikely corners of the earth, led them in large numbers to the ranching lands of Alberta.— The Eastern provinces and states had not reached the saturation point in 1874: they could still absorb most of their younger sons. The older lands sent more of their young men so that until 1895, that is during the "Old Days", during the "Golden Age" the ranching community was predominantly British and predominantly upper-class. This applied especially to the ranch-owners and to the superior officers of the British cattle-companies. The ranch foremen and the stock-hands were frequently Americans from the ranching states, especially Wyoming and Montana.

There seems to be justification for accepting the view that the early ranching community was predominantly British. It is recorded in the Journals of the Legislative Council of the North-West Territories that in 1885 "the Provisional District of Alberta (had)....received a very important addition to its population, consisting principally of wealthy families, whose future occupation will be chiefly that of stock-raising" (1). L.V. Kelly's book on the ranching

(1) Lieut.-Gov. Dewdney's Speech at the 8th session, Oct. 13—Nov. 19, 1886.

period, "Range Men", is inclined to suggest that immigrants of this sort were, with few exceptions drunken and dissolute remittance-men, tolerated for the ready money they brought into the country. It seems odd that a community such as Kelly describes, with its strong resentment of Britain and the British, should have sent as its first representative to the Territorial Council, Viscount Boyle, who, during the eighties, ranched at Macleod (2). Professor MacInnes, in his excellent book, "In the Shadow of the Rockies," regards the British immigration as of the utmost importance, and indignantly refutes the suggestion that all British immigrants were wasters and drunkards. Most of them were "remittance-men" in the sense that they had allowances or capital from the Mother Country, but that all should share the blame which rightly attaches to a few of their number, is absurd.

Naturally the ranch-owners during the first years, whether individuals or companies, knew nothing of ranching methods. They may have known something about agriculture as it was practiced in Eastern America or in the British Isles, but they had never dealt with stock upon the open range. Practical

(2) Journals of the Council of the N.W.T. 1885.

assistance could be obtained from the range country of the United States, where by 1880 the ranching industry had achieved a certain maturity and developed a definite practice. The new range inherited the experience of the old. The limitation of the American range had begun, and American ranchmen and stock hands, who loved the life with an abiding passion, were glad to come to the new land which offered continued freedom from barbed wire and civilization. The close contact which had existed between Alberta and Montana since the first fur-traders had brought in whiskey from Fort Benton made it natural that during the early years, while the owners of the ranches were British or Eastern ~~and~~^{Canadians or Americans}, the stock-hands or cowboys, and many of the ranch-managers, should be American ~~Westerners~~.

This difference in nationality between employers and employed was a temporary condition. The ranch-owners, except those who were absentees, learnt their new business rapidly and many of them became quite as capable practical stock-hands as their employees. A native-born stock-hand class gradually evolved, although it remained essentially American in its personality. A number of the smaller ranchers became

good stock-hands since their interests were not large enough to require all their energies for executive work. Some large ranches employed young Britons, who learnt the business from the ground up. At the same time a number of American ranchers appeared. In spite of the tempering influence of time this cleavage remained, that while the owner-class was British, even English, in its outlook, the employee-class was strongly American and Western. There was little friction, for a strong practical sympathy existed and each class was secure in the consciousness of its own superiority. As the years passed the ranchers drifted out of the country, or proved themselves capable, and the good points of the stock-hands were revealed to their owners. What little friction there had been, disappeared in mutual admiration and ⁱⁿ mutual antagonism to the "dirt farmer".

After 1890 the settlers who came into Southern Alberta were of all races and classes, ~~and mostly~~ ~~mostly Americans~~. Those who were drawn from the upper reaches of European and Eastern life, and they were numerous, were inclined to identify themselves with the "ranchers," although they were

economically more akin to the "farmers." They reinforced the ranching class so strongly that it remained a noticeable section of the population long after the ranching industry as it was understood during the "Golden Age" had been submerged. These new settlers helped the older-established ranchers to give the industry the new lease of life which has been called the "New Ranching". They changed it from a particular method of economic subsistence, to a way of life against an economic background almost indistinguishable from mixed farming. To those who were ranching in the "Golden Age" their order seemed to end in 1895: actually it survived until 1914. Here and there it still lingers but it has been absorbed, a valuable leaven, into the life of the province.

Southern Alberta was fortunate in her early settlers. They were, with a few regrettable exceptions, the best an old country had to offer to a new. In breeding, education, ability and spirit, Southern Alberta's pioneers excelled those of almost any other community. Their adventurous youth brought them there and enabled them to overcome the country's hardships. The solid qualities

which developed with age kept them there. A few passed on, perennially adventurous, to new frontiers; a few were misfits in any country, they had their day and vanished; the majority remained, a reliable foundation. The ranchers had the defects of their qualities but the defects can be forgiven in view of their services.

(b) Daily Life

Nowhere in Alberta are pioneer days very far in the past; many of the communities are still in the first stage of development and some seem permanently arrested therein. The ranchers of Southern Alberta were pioneers but their hardships were slight compared with those of the people who hewed homes out of the forests of Upper Canada a century before. The country to which they came offered a living with little preparatory effort. It is easier to turn cattle onto the range than to grow wheat in the heart of a virgin forest. The pioneer ranchers often had some capital and a good deal of influence. A little social pressure at Ottawa must have eased the passage of a good many younger sons.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of the pioneer rancher as of the pioneer elsewhere was his failure ~~of~~ ^{to} emphasize the hardship of his life. There were hardships, difficult and unfamiliar work, long exposure, bitter cold and disappointing results for the men, inadequate houses, more hard and unfamiliar work, and long periods of isolation for the women. Yet when the

pioneers recall their early years, hardships are merely recounted as incidental, negligible, amusing. Certainly they did not dominate life. Perhaps it is the vagary of memory. Perhaps it is the spirit in which they had been trained at home. Perhaps it was because everyone was young—a little girl who ✓ had come to Pincher Creek in 1881 as a baby, wept when she saw old men and women for the first time when she was taken to Eastern Canada.

When conditions in a country which has not long since passed ~~out~~ of the pioneer stage are being described it should be remembered that advance is piece-meal, that at the same point in ~~development~~ time there are parts of the country in every stage of development. Although this is to an extent true of Southern Alberta, its natural endowments permitted it to attain a unity and homogeneity which make generalization possible. The pattern of life in one river-valley was repeated again in the next, with only slight individual differences. Everyone, it was said, knew everyone else. Certainly, everyone's cattle ranged free and that was a great unifying influence.

(1) Work and Working Conditions of the Men.

It was the work of the ranchers which gave their

community meaning. Their work was the foundation of the life of the ranches, the reality behind it. Their economic usefulness depended upon the way in which they looked after the livestock they owned or of which they had charge. Not all the work was done by the ranch-owners and the company-managers; they planned, and the brunt of the execution of their plans fell to the stock-hands and the ranch foremen. The small rancher did much of his own work and naturally a thorough knowledge of the practical technique of the business was essential to success.

The every-day care of the stock was in the hands of the cowboys and the foremen under general orders from the owner or manager of the ranch. Ranching did not mean merely the acquisition of a large lease and a proportionate herd of stock and the placing of one in convenient juxtaposition to the other. The general routine was not particularly onerous, but there were special practices, of which the "roundup" has been most frequently described.

The roundup was the gathering of the cattle from the range, at first from all Southern Alberta, and then, when this proved impracticable, from various well-marked natural districts. There were two

roundups, one in the spring for branding, etc., and one in the fall for the selection of beef. The cattle were divided according to their owners, calves were branded and culling was done. The same procedure was applied to horses. Sheep were always herded and their owners had no need of roundups.

When the practice of district roundups was adopted, it became customary for districts to send representatives to other roundups to claim stock which had strayed from its home district on to the foreign range. The roundup, as we have seen, bore heavily on the small man, with five hundred cattle or less. On the roundup the large ranch of the district usually "sent out a wagon" probably several wagons, and usually the representatives of other ranchers paid board. Branding was done on the range, with the minimum apparatus it required. A big roundup lasted several weeks; it was the most characteristic institution of the ranch and one of the most picturesque, with its great herds of cattle, its wagons, its fire, and the sight of difficult work accomplished with efficiency and speed. The canvasses of C.W. Russell illustrate its intricacies better than they can be described.

As we have seen elsewhere, the ranchers after several cold winters, began to put up hay to carry their stock through this trying season. At first only calves and weak cows were fed, later the practice was widely extended. As the country developed, grain and forage crops supplemented the wild hay. The later phase of ranching devoted itself more and more to the winter feeding of cattle. A certain amount of agricultural labour supplemented the purely pastoral efforts of the stock-hands. The men of the old school scorned such work as fit only for farmers and on most of the ranches except ~~for~~ the small ones, cultivation remained at a minimum. The ranchers preferred to buy feed from homesteaders rather than raise their own. Haying-time, however, rapidly became the busiest season of the year, lasting for about six weeks. Fencing was another indignity which the old-fashioned cow-hand suffered with blasphemous reluctance. The increase in settlement, the necessity for preserving winter ranges and hay and forage crops made fences essential. Much of the fencing was in the river-bottoms and the eccentric habits of the mountain streams compelled annual attention to the miles of barbed wire.

During the winter some of the herds had to be fed

on the home ranch. It was the custom to hold breeding-cows near the home ranch all year round while the rest of the herd ranged abroad. This required constant line-riding. Cattle on the range had to be looked after during severe weather and turned onto the choicer ranges which had been reserved for winter pasture. Water had to be kept open, for cattle, unlike horses, cannot quench their thirst with snow. A very severe winter meant hardy, cold work in an effort to save the lives of stock by guiding and forcing them to distant but better pastures. Winter, however, was usually the slack season.

The rancher required very little equipment. At the home-ranch there was the usual quota of stables, store-houses, granaries, corrals, etc., and on out-lying leases or ranches there might be cabins for the men and a shed or two. Buildings were simple, generally of logs where logs could be obtained, but might, if well built, be warm and comfortable. Stock was wintered outside, even around the home ranches, although there was usually shelter for exceptional cases. The agricultural implements used were those of the Eastern farm, although in later years ranchers tended to lag behind farmers in their use of up-to

date machinery, simply because machinery was of secondary importance.

The most important item in ranch equipment was the horse. The stock-hand usually owned his own saddle or saddles—stock-saddles of course—lariats and other equipment. Frequently he owned his own horse. Most of his working hours were spent in the saddle and this is the aspect of ranching most popularized. Without good horses and capable riders the industry would have been like a locomotive without wheels. A good stock-horse and a good stock-hand were inseparable, and to the rancher indispensable.

Work on the ranches was not inhumanly hard. It was not nearly as hard as work on farms. At certain seasons hard work was expected, but there was no weary level of back-breaking toil. It was healthy work, with plenty of exercise in the open air. The only risk to health was frost-bite in the winter. Of course the element of physical danger was seldom absent but it was regarded as part of the day's routine. Hours, long at certain seasons, were not consistently so. Plentiful leisure seems to have been the rule; long hours and hard work were seasonal rather than permanent. Ranch work conferred independence on the employee. General orders were given but their execution depended upon the

energy, initiative and skill of the individual. Skill was essential to the success of the stock-hand; he was a skilled worker, member of an old, exclusive and jealous craft.

The workers on the ranches liked their life, whether they worked for themselves or for another. They believed that the life of the ranches was the finest in the world, were they stock-hands or ranch-owners. Such a life appealed only to a certain type. There were miserable misfits. Lonely suicides and hasty flights from the range proved that ranching was not a universally suitable profession. The transports of enthusiasm which it evoked from its practitioners, even those who found it financially hopeless, suggest that working-conditions, if occasionally poor, were not uniformly wretched.

(2) Work and Working Conditions of the Women

Well-deserved tribute has been paid to the pioneer women of Alberta and the women of the ranches have received their share. Their hardships and privations have been celebrated, not perhaps in song, but certainly in story. To them fell multitudinous duties. They were the home-makers and on their shoulders fell much of the responsibility of raising their families. Most of the ranch-women came from homes of comfort and luxury, they

were accustomed to the ample leisure which the plenitude of servants in middle-class Victorian England permitted, and their training had not been one to inculcate sturdy self-reliance. When they came to Alberta, especially to the Alberta of the eighties, they found a very different existence. It is strange that there were so few complaints of the bitter toil of the new life but apparently these women bore their burdens with praiseworthy equanimity. Why?

Perhaps it was the very difference of their new environment. It must have seemed an adventure, and before the feeling of adventure wore off, comfort had arrived. They were young and the young are supposed to be more tolerant of discomfort than the old. Their wants seemed unimportant, for behind the ranch-women was a solid tradition which made possessions second to origin. The bitterness of competition was absent. No one had more than the other of the materials of comfort. The shadow of success was over their enterprise; they remembered their past lives and they would model their future lives after the past. Present discomforts seemed negligible.

For most of the ranchers early discomfort did not endure. Even those who came before the railway did not live for long in their mud-floored, mud-roofed cabins

Solid and watertight log houses replaced them, small but eminently liveable. By 1890 almost everywhere money could secure most of the less perishable luxuries of life. The wholesale importation of young and eligible female friends and relatives as governesses, housekeepers and companions, which was almost an industry in the nineties and the nineteen-hundreds, considerably relieved the burden of work which fell to the rancher's wife.

The actual work which the women of the ranches had to do was very much the same as that of housewives everywhere who are without servants. Sometimes assistance was available from the source aforementioned, ephemeral but helpful, but usually the housewife worked alone or with the assistance of her daughters. Primarily the house had to be kept in livable order and the meals prepared. The former duty was conditioned by the size of the house and the ability and convictions of the housekeeper. It was not an arduous duty, for simplicity was the rule. The preparation of the meals was more difficult. Food was plentiful but it was difficult to achieve variety, especially at a distance from the railway. The personal factor was equally important here for individual ingenuity,

skill and vigour counted heavily under pioneer circumstances. The hospitality ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{the} of ranches ~~xxxxxx~~ made the preparation of meals, simple though they were, the chief duty of the housewife.

The ranch women had other duties. They made their own clothes, their children's and many of their menfolk's. This duty took up a good deal of spare time. Their house-furniture was a matter of their own resource; men might be trusted with the foundation work but the women supplied the draperies so fashionable in late Victorian days. There was always washing, ironing and mending to be done and the various seasonal duties like preserving. Butter-making was left to the women. Frequently women taught their children when no other education was available. They were usually the letter-writers and the keepers of accounts and diaries. Sometimes they had to act as dentist or doctor when such services were not otherwise available and they were frequently in demand as nurses.

The ranch women rarely did much outdoor work. The English tradition was strong enough to make it difficult for men to believe that the woman who was too weak to pass a tea-cup in the drawing-room was strong enough to milk a cow in the stable. On many of the ranches

very little of the work which on farms is traditionally the task of women was done at all, as may be inferred from the small numbers of fowls and milch cows, the small yield of dairy products in the Macleod census district in 1891. On many ranches no cows were milked, simply because the men regarded such labour as beneath their dignity. It must have annoyed housewives to use tinned milk while thousands of cattle roamed outside their doors. On some of the ranches where these duties did exist, they fell to the women, but because they enjoyed the work or preferred to do it rather than do without its products. However the typical ranch woman did little outside work except for occasional flower-gardening, which was held to be a suitable occupation.

Since ranch-women did most of their work about their homes, their working conditions may be conveniently considered in connection with their houses. Considering the newness of the country, they were not unsatisfactory and the work was little harder than work in the same houses to-day. The ranch women worked hard and long at unaccustomed labours, but with a few exceptions they seem, like their menfolk, to have found happiness in the new life.

(b) Housings and House Furnishings(1) Houses

The houses of the Victorians may have been stuffy, tasteless, over-ornamented and over-draped but to their occupants they were the acme of beauty and comfort. Whatever their faults they were large. The houses which the ranchers occupied in Alberta must have offered a strange contrast to their former homes, but with pioneer adaptability, they made the best of it and produced dwellings which were far from unpleasing.

Elsewhere in Western Canada the pioneer has often had to be content with a sod shack or a dug-out for the first years after arrival. The rancher was generally more fortunate. The very early ranchers and those who settled later in isolated and uninhabited districts sometimes lived in a tent or camped outside until the first rude log shack was built. Otherwise it was only the men who occasionally roughed it thus. The women and children of the rancher's family were left in town or with friends until adequate shelter was available. As the country developed it was possible to provide a more finished article as the "first house" and the hardship of mud floor and sod roof was rare. The dwellings of the first ranchers were very

primitive. Logs were the earliest building-material as they had been in other pioneer communities. Plenty of logs were available in the foothill country and spruce and pine were most popular. On the prairies, unless spruce and pine could be floated down the rivers cottonwood logs were used. The log cabin, built without finished lumber, nails or shingles, mud floored and mud roofed, was the rudimentary ranch-house. It was not long endured, but with improvements it remained the typical dwelling until saw-mills were established.

The size of these houses varied according to the length of logs used. Frequently there was only one room, but where the rancher had brought his family with him the cabin was typically divided into three sections. At one end was the men's quarters, at the other, usually the north end, was a store-room and in the middle the family quarters. These rooms did not communicate with one another but had only one door each which opened outside. The central room was kitchen and dining room as well as living-room and sleeping room for the family and contained most of the sparse furniture.

The walls of this primary dwelling were of logs, hewn square or left in the round and chinked with

mud. The logs were laid in horizontal courses (1) and the finish of the corners varied with the discretion of the builder. Upon the skill of the latter the whole structure depended, for the erection of a log house is a complicated task. The cabins were usually on sills rather than on a more solid foundation. Doors were made of hewn planks and various and ingenious hinges and fasteners were contrived. Such hardware could be imported from Fort Benton and these complicated mechanisms were a proof of ingenuity rather than necessity. Windows were few and small, with glass from Fort Benton, which was very expensive. The floors were mud, puddled and tramped to the consistency of concrete, and fairly satisfactory except in rainy weather. Roofs were made of split rails, covered with grass and mud. Roofs were the most unsatisfactory feature of these houses and the need for shingles or even sawn lumber was felt most acutely at this point. Such houses offered shelter but they must have been very uncomfortable.

For the houses, the establishment of saw-mills was

(1) The attractive vertical method used in Europe, i.e., Switzerland, Norway, was seldom adopted. Christ Church, Millarville, and its old rectory are excellent examples of this rare method. The builder, Shack (Jacques ?) appears to have been Swiss and the designer, Canon Webb-Perlee knew Switzerland well. The horizontal method was that of the French Canadians and North America generally.

the critical event. By 1883 four saw-mills are recorded as established in Southern Alberta (2). This meant that much better houses could be built and finished with sawn and planed wood. Doors and windows, frames, wainscoting, floors and roofs or the materials to make them, could be obtained. Even in those leisured days, to make such articles out of logs entirely by hand would have been impossible. There were not many carpenters available and the cost of transporting such a bulky article as finished lumber was prohibitive. These products of the first saw-mills were rough and ill-finished but infinitely preferable to the hand-hewn logs and planks of the immediate past. When they became available a marked improvement took place in the construction of the ranch-house.

By about 1884 the ranchers were moving into their new houses. Most of the old ones, with new roofs, were converted into stables, store-houses or bunk-houses, and served their purposes well. Many of them still exist but few are used for human habitations. The new house was on a considerably more ambitious scale. Log houses allow for almost unlimited additions and the average ranch house as it stands to-day was

seldom built all at once. The first beginnings, even of the new house, were very unpretentious. Sometimes it was the old house with the new improvements. More usually a square structure formed the nucleus. The square plan has many advantages. It is easily built, simply roofed, and gives a maximum cubic content for material used. The square was divided into living-room and bedrooms. Single-storey houses were commonest although a loft was often arranged to give extra bedroom space.

Once the first unit was complete additions could be made at leisure. Since space and materials cost little and the ranchers were accustomed to large rooms, the rooms were of good size. A typical ranch sitting-room would be about sixteen feet by twenty-two and kitchens were usually of similar dimensions. Bedrooms were much smaller. The kitchen frequently served as dining-room as well. Store-rooms were the rule and summer-kitchens were popular. As a few of the new houses had stone foundations, although most of them were still built on sills, good cellars were to be found. Otherwise the cellar was merely a hole in the ground reached by a precarious ladder and a dangerous trap-door. A good many ranches had spring-houses to keep their perishables cool and

some had root-cellars. Bunk-houses for the men employed were almost always separate from the main body of the house and sometimes at a considerable distance from it. Occasionally, and usually on large ranches in later days, the men had their own cook and the lady of the house was relieved of responsibility for their physical welfare. Verandahs were popular additions to ranch-houses, keeping them cool in summer and "affording pleasant auxiliary sitting-rooms." Unfortunately they made the house dark. Adequate plumbing, always rare in the country, was, until the last decade almost unknown. The water-supply was the local stream, a nearby spring or else a well. As by the very nature of the industry the ranch-houses were rarely far from water, lack of that necessity was infrequent.

Bricks were unobtainable during the first years of settlement and chimneys were made out of oil-cans which are indispensable to the modern pioneer community. They would hardly have been acceptable to fire-insurance companies and the fire hazard arising from their use was an accepted feature of everyday life. The North-West Council even went so far as to pass an ordinance stating definite requirements

as to chimneys. Stone chimneys may have been attempted by the ingenious, as they certainly were later, but there is no record of their use before 1885. By 1890 the main chimneys were usually of brick, but auxiliaries were still made of metal. Ranges and heaters were freighted in from Fort Benton. In a two-story house of eight rooms, one range and one heater were regarded as sufficient (3). Coal was often used where it was locally available and it was mined very early. Sherar's mine near Lethbridge was operating in 1880. Elsewhere wood was used, for ranch-houses were rarely located far from wood supplies.

During the eighties, the log house flourished. As the ranchers prospered and their families increased, their houses grew larger and more comfortable. Some of them were very beautiful and all of them had the charm which comes from native material used functionally. All through the ranching country, along the edges of the rivers and the streams, among the trees which grew there, lay these houses, simple, solid, comfortable, secure in the knowledge that they were pleasant places to live in.

(3) Built by George Ives, of Pincher Creek.

and that they could, with suitable adaptation, grow old gracefully.

Unfortunately fashion was growing in strength upon the last frontier. During the "Golden Age" the ranchers cared little what capers she cut in the remote world. Log houses were comfortable and there appeared to be no reason for a change. Fashion as usual prevailed over common-sense. Log houses were discovered to be dusty, hard to keep up, draughty, almost indecent. They were old-fashioned. Everyone should have a frame house, a nice modern house with a balcony, some colored glass and plenty of tortured wood work. Everyone of consequence who built a house now built a frame house, except for those who were so unfortunately poor that they could afford nothing but logs. This momentous change in Alberta's tradition of domestic architecture came at slightly different times according to locality, but 1890 may be selected as a convenient point of divergence. Until 1890 an indigenous style was developing, attractive, comfortable, simple, inexpensive and as admirably suited to its purposes as the landscape its simplicity adorned. After 1890 the ranchers joined in the last throes of the Battle

of the styles and an average successful rancher was as likely to erect a Moorish villa or a Swiss chalet as a log house.

The frame era brought a new series of ranch-houses ugly, expensive and devoid of individuality, but indicative of their owner's social prestige. After 1890 ranch-houses resembled town-houses in general plan and construction although grudgingly adapted to rural use. No acute distinction could after that date be made between rural and urban houses although a few isolated die-hards still experimented with logs and native stone.

It is hard not to regret the change. Their style of building was one of the ranching period's most concrete contributions and it seems sad that it could not have been allowed to develop further. There are still people who are experimenting with log in relation to new methods of building and at the same time trying to preserve the old tradition. Unselfconsciously a style had developed, of which the characteristics were large, irregular masses, long, low lines and large roof areas. Beyond this there had been no crystallization, for the style was still in an experimental stage. It may ~~xxxx~~ form the root of

a style of domestic architecture, unpretentious but beautiful and peculiarly suited to certain rural localities.

(2) Furniture and House Fittings.

The construction and general aspect of the ranch house in its various phases has been considered. Its interior appearance and its furnishings and fittings also require treatment. Considerable individual differences exist here as well, differences of wealth of taste and of necessity, and the most we can hope to obtain is a sort of composite picture of what some of the rooms in a ranch-house looked like. Most of them have existed almost unchanged from the eighties and nineties, a few draperies removed, a little new furniture added, but substantially the same. The Briton abroad has an aptitude for unchanging preservation which simplifies the problem of reconstruction. If Victorian drawing-rooms held too many ornaments in 1883, sitting-rooms or alcots ranches still preserved them twenty, thirty, forty, even fifty years later.

The pre-railway ranch houses were furnished and equipped with extreme simplicity, as only the barest

necessities could be freighted in from Fort Benton. The first houses with their thatched roofs and mud floors were not designed to encourage the introduction of fine furniture. Much of the furniture was home-made although as early as 1882 Fort Macleod possessed a furniture store. Tables, chairs and benches could be made by anyone with a few tools and an aptitude for cabinet-work. A cooking-range was usually the important purchase and beds and springs were purchased rather than made. Chests of drawers and the ubiquitous American rocking-chair sometimes appeared in homes where a feminine influence was felt. As in the first dwellings most of the furniture was in the family quarters, space was at a premium and various devices were adopted for its full utilization, truckle-beds for example, which could be wheeled underneath more permanent resting-places.

Very few families endured these discomforts for long, and after 1883 most established ranchers and their families had moved into the more commodious dwellings described elsewhere. Better interior finishing was one of the greatest improvements. In the old houses the logs had been left bare, a practice which, although it gave an attractive appearance, was

trying to the house-keeper. The new houses were either lined with stained or varnished match-boarding, or else they were lath-and-plastered and distempered. This made a warmer and cleaner house, although the walls were less picturesque than the bare logs had been. Some of the new houses even had built-in cupboards, closets and linen-presses, especially if the builder happened to be of an ingenious turn. The new houses offered a better background for furniture as there was no more danger from leaking roofs and there was more space to display it. The houses were not overcrowded for freight rates still existed, but there was more furniture and much more comfort.

The decorative instinct asserted itself. When the first settlers had freighted in their belongings they had brought only the barest necessities, such things as flat-irons, table-silver, linen, bedding and cooking utensils. Larger furnishings were purchased at the nearest store, home-made substitutes were used or the article dispensed with altogether. Books, pictures, ornaments and fine table-furnishings were non-existent. As the settlements grew older these luxuries slowly drifted in, remained and accumulated. They were the appurtenances of the

life which the ranchers had known and they were quickly absorbed into the new life. The arrival of the railway stimulated the importation of these trifles, although in the more remote districts during the eighties they were still rare and precious.

Taste and ingenuity were valuable assistants in the furnishing of the ranch house. Much of the furniture was home-made, the dining tables in the kitchens, the settees against the wall, the cupboards and the chairs. Packing-cases, decked out with muslin and covered with the excellent linens with which Victorian trousseaux were so amply furnished, made sideboards and dressing-tables and wash-hand-stands. A little furniture, usually American, was purchased. The last decades of the nineteenth century were nowhere noted for their excellence in furniture design and the American industry was far from famous for the quality or workmanship of its products. Suitably disguised by the yards of drapery which the Victorians adored, the few pieces fitted well enough into the general scheme.

Like the furniture, windows were generously

draped. Floors were covered with skins. Cattle and horse hides were commonest, with bear, wolf or coyote for variety. Poorly tanned, these skins were hard and odorous; and one lady, more ingenious than her friends, covered the floor of her sitting-room with a rug made from her family's accumulated rags by the Mormon settlers on Lee's Creek. Heating arrangements have already been described. As for lighting, even very early settlers obtained kerosene lamps at the stores at the Police posts. These were frequently supplemented by tallow candles home-made from beef fat.

After the railways arrived, the ranchers made considerable importations from Great Britain and Eastern Canada. Family possessions were brought out and many new settlers brought all the furniture and household equipment from their old homes. Some of it looked a little out of place but a great deal of fine furniture and household gear found its way into the ranch-houses of Southern Alberta. The general atmosphere changed little with the new additions, indeed interiors seemed to have changed much less than exteriors. Packing-case makeshifts rubbed shoulders with family Chippendale in a general atmosphere of good taste, a little obscured by

draperies, but solid, comfortable and refined. It was hard to change such an interior. Half the ornaments could disappear and there would still have been a good many. New furniture was lost among its predecessors. With all their faults and odd, amazing inconveniences, the ranch houses were pleasant places, homes, as Mr. Staveley-Hill might have remarked, from home. (1)

(1) Alexander Staveley-Hill, M.P., interested in the Onley Ranch Company, author of "From Home to Home."

(3) Foods and Cooking

Except for the Indian women, the wives of the Police officers and a few hardy pioneers like Mrs. Armstrong and the famous "Aunty", Southern Alberta was in its first years an exclusively male community and its food was characteristically simple. After 1881 the influence of women who began to come into the country transformed the simple diet of the plains.

A varied diet cannot be completely sustained by importation but depends on a measure of agricultural development. The Police found a large native meat supply available. It had to be supplemented by freighting in staples such as flour and salt. To avoid the prohibitive costs and to give more variety the Government established police farms near the posts to raise vegetables and cereals for animal as well as human consumption. The police were thus the pioneer farmers and gardeners of Southern Alberta.

An enterprising Montanan, Olson by name, brought in a herd of dairy cattle and sold his produce at excellent prices. Domestic fowl were unknown until a later date. Other supplies were obtained through I.G. Baker and Company, whose stores were also the chief sources of goods for the early ranchers. Their

stocks, which were freighted in from the United States, included almost everything which could possibly survive the journey, and were sold at very high prices.

The diet of the first ranchers was much the same as that of the police. If anything it was less varied. After the buffalo had disappeared in 1878, beef replaced buffalo-meat as the staple food. By the Census of 1880-81 there were only 346 sheep in the North-West Territories so it seems unlikely that mutton appeared very often on Alberta tables. There were no hogs although salt pork and bacon were imported. The country fortunately teemed with game and its streams with fish. The hunter could take all he wanted as game laws and closed seasons were unknown. Game and fish formed an important addition to the rancher's diet well into the nineties.~~at least~~ Game was often sold in the towns. In Calgary in 1889 a brace of prairie-chicken fetched thirty-five or forty cents. The proceeds formed a welcome addition to the settler's ready cash. The eggs of wild fowl were a popular delicacy and ranchers, remembering the past, compared them favourably with plover's eggs.

Like the Police, the ranchers grew vegetables, or purchased them from those who did. Potatoes were most important, followed by vegetables such as carrots, turnips, cabbage and onions, which could be kept all winter. At those ranches which had gardens the various vegetables were enjoyed in season. The ranchers do not seem to have been adventurous gardeners but followed beaten paths in their choice of varieties. The women were of a more inventive spirit. In 1888 tomato plants were being raised at a ranch near Gleichen and presented to neighbors. Many of the ranch women canned and otherwise preserved the more exotic and perishable vegetables, to the enrichment of their winter menus.

Flour, as well as other staples and luxuries had to be imported. Prices were high at first but sank to normal levels after 1885 in regions near a railway. All varieties of tinned stuff were obtainable at centres like Macleod and Calgary. Following the tradition of the Hudson's Bay Company the merchants stocked the best brands obtainable. Cost of transport made prices so high that the very best cost comparatively little more than inferior varieties, so the pioneers who could afford them enjoyed the best imperishables.

There were deficiencies. Butter, milk and eggs, dear to the housewife's heart, were during the early eighties rare and costly. Since by 1888 in the Gleichen district butter sold for twenty-five cents a pound and in 1889 turkeys sold for \$1.25 a bird, it would appear that the high prices for such products were neither universal nor permanent. Fresh fruits, except for those that grew wild, were almost impossible to obtain. A barrel of Eastern apples purchased at Pincher Creek in the middle eighties cost fifteen dollars. Dried and tinned fruits were substituted.

In post-railway days it was possible to obtain most edibles at a price; although even in the first decade of the twentieth century out-of-season vegetables and fresh fruits were rare outside the cities. Even after 1885 most of the ranching country was remote from the railway and not until the middle nineties did the south-westerly areas come into close contact with outside markets. The ranch housewife, unlike her urban sister, had only a limited range of foodstuffs available and she had to wait to replenish ~~her~~ unexpectedly diminished supplies. In early years she was compelled to order all her special requirements for the year at one time, and this problem,

although it progressively lessened, always remained.

Ranch meals were simple, meat, vegetables and bread, followed by puddings or cake. Cooking was very cosmopolitan and recipes were constantly exchanged in an effort to secure variety. For great festivals Mrs. Beeton's monumental handbook was produced and the glories of English cookery attempted and, one gathers, achieved. Tea and coffee, with the advantage to the former, were the most popular beverages. Beer, and other slightly alcoholic drinkables were very often made at home. The men consumed a good deal of brandy and whiskey. Meals in the grand ranch manner were great occasions reminiscent of Dickensian banquets. They were served with the utmost informality but a dim reverence brooded over them as if the ghost of a not-quite-forgotten Victorian mahogany sanctified the rougher boards of the last frontier.

(4) Clothing

Skins and furs were not the only materials available to clothe the pioneers of Southern Alberta. The Hudson's Bay Company had initiated a commendable policy by importing only the best cloths. Men's work-clothes could be obtained at the stores of the posts although many men preferred to equip themselves in Fortede, where prices were lower and stocks more varied. Many of the settlers who came to the ranches brought extensive wardrobes with them, more notable for completeness than for suitability to the new life. One legendary lady, a later arrival, had eighteen trunks. It must have cost a good deal to freight them from Fort Benton.

When women began to come into the country they found the stores ill-equipped for their needs, and mothers wept as they fitted their daughters with copper-toed boots. Ready-made clothes were obtainable, but in limited variety, and ready-made clothes were indeed a little suspect to the generation which was settling in Alberta.

Those ladies who could afford to do so continued to have their clothes made "at Home". The less fortunate majority had to be content with making their

own clothes from the excellent materials available. This practice had its disadvantages, for in Tippler Creek early in the eighties needles cost twenty-five cents apiece, a price attributed by the vendor to the freight. Trips to the West, or to the "Old Country" were usually occasions for the purchase of a good many clothes. The women made some of their menfolk's clothing but the men bought more ready-made clothes and their English wardrobes lasted longer. Tailors and dressmakers appeared at Macleod and Calgary and their services assisted the amateur seamstresses. Some of the professional clothes-makers were excellent, especially in the later years, and their cut was admired we are told, in London and New York. But during the whole ranching era women continued to make most of their own and their children's clothes themselves.

Fashions on the ranches during the "Golden Age" seem to have been rather insensitive to the changes in the prevailing mode decreed elsewhere. The excellent English stuffs wore well and descended through the family from the eldest to the youngest. Few of the ranchers' wives, until the railway brought civilization, cared whether their hat or bonnet was outmoded or "stylish, since no one knew anyway. They were much too busy to be bothered with such trivialities. Competition

xxx Life-blood of fashion, was innocent in a land where unmarried women were so rare and eligible and young men so commonplace.

An increase in leisure and wealth and the improvement in communications during the nineties and the nineteen-hundreds ended this happy state of affairs. Women still made their own clothes, or on special occasions had a dressmaker make them, but they reflected more faithfully the modes of London and Paris, although not with the photographic accuracy of to-day. For the majority, clothes were very simple, and the elaborate toilettes of Edwardian England were seldom paralleled in Canada. A few die-hards, secured against criticism by their early arrival, continued to ignore the changes of fashion, and complacently wore clothes made along the same general lines as those in vogue when they ^{had} left their native land for the first time.

There is a parallel between the attitude of the ranch-women to clothing and their attitude to house-decoration. They used their native taste and ingenuity to make the best of limited materials and against heavy odds they achieved a good appearance. The influence of fashion appeared in both fields at about

the same time and in both their houses and their clothes the ranch owners showed an attitude for preserving without change the styles to which they had been accustomed.

(5) Morals and Manners

The years between 1870 and 1900 brought changes to every level of English life. During the seventies the closely-articulated society of the Victorian age was almost undisturbed. The eighties shook its foundations, but not until the nineties were the changes which had begun in London generalized for all England. The upper and upper middle classes were the first affected, and since the immigrant ranchers were largely drawn from these elements, the ranching community was not Victorian but late Victorian. It knew Wilde and the New Woman, it was acquainted with the Yellow Book as well ^{with} ~~as~~ the works of Alfred, Lord Tennyson. Although they were "hearty" rather than "arty," most of the ranchers and their wives had the outlook of a younger generation. At the same time there were many who had been brought up in the rigid seventies, or in the remote country in the eighties, whose influence tinged the modernism of the ranchers with the past. Perhaps the community is most suitably described as conservatively late Victorian.

If we can judge morality from a Police-record, Alberta was not especially free from the vices of the world. Murder, arson, shooting with intent, forgery,

all the varieties of theft and of assault, deserting employment, non-payment of wages, gambling, prostitution, bigamy, vagrancy, attempted suicide, and receiving money under false pretences all figure in the police list of convictions for 1873. In a new settlement, even where the forces of law are represented by the Mounted Police, the presence of a considerable criminal element seems inevitable. The Western States were not remarkable for their high regard for law. It would be unfair to tax the ranching community with all the sins and errors of the inhabitants of Southern Alberta, but ranching was the dominant industry, it employed many of the criminals and provided the conditions which attracted them.

Offences against property were the common charge of the courts. Cattle stealing always, and horse-stealing when prices were rising, were the most frequent offences. Although the public conscience was strongly opposed to these transgressions and although the ranchers would have liked to deal harshly with the offenders, the property sense of the Indians and of many white settlers remained rudimentary. The ranch-owners themselves were rarely

implicated for they felt too strongly about such theft to countenance it among themselves. Most of the stealing was done by Indians and by the undesirables who formed part of the floating population common to all frontier settlements.

Standards of personal honesty were high, although personal honesty was not always felt to apply to other people's cattle. The codes of the British settlers, of the American cowboys and of the Mounted Police were on this point unanimous. In spite of the many cases and convictions for stealing stock, personal obligations were met with a scrupulous exactitude. There were numerous occasions on which cattle-thieves, safe with their booty on the other side of the border, sent money to pay debts they had contracted before their forced flight. A lie was held in deepest infamy although tall stories were admired and retailed with personal additions. In spite of large loopholes, rigid honesty was characteristic of the ranching community and old-timers take a considerable pride in the rectitude of their generation.

Crimes of violence were regrettably common, although on this point too the public conscience

was extremely sensitive, if the general horror when murder was committed can be accepted as proof of sensitiveness. Some peculiarly unpleasing crimes were committed, but they were usually the work of Indians or of the aforementioned undesirables. Violence as a result of high spirits, a frequent occurrence in the range country of the Republic, was almost unknown in Alberta. For this condition the credit must go to the vigilance and high reputation of the Mounted Police. Suicide was far from rare on the isolated ranches and sometimes business failure, too, urged ranchers to take their own lives.

The attitude of the citizens of Alberta towards the law was not always one of patient respect. The ranchers felt that the Police treated the Indians with unnecessary leniency and they would cheerfully have taken the law into their own hands and strung the suspect from the most convenient tree. A "Vigilante Committee" was actually organized, along Montana lines, at Fincher Creek about 1882 to deal with horse-stealing in that district. Its members, who were among the most representative and influential ranchers of the region, may have had no intention of taking extreme measures; according to one of them they

were merely "playing a game of 'bluff'" (4).

However the incident is suggestive. At Lethbridge in 1896 a man was tarred and feathered, but not, it appears, ridden out of town on a rail (5). Although there were these occasional lassoes into disregard of law, horse-play of this kind was rare, thanks largely to Police efficiency.

There were other unconventional practices among the early inhabitants. The free-traders had taken wives from among the native population, a custom which as late as the eighties was emulated by the settlers, though rarely. Usually such marriages were made Indian fashion although some of them were both legal and lasting. As many of the Hudson's Bay men had had Indian wives, a considerable population of mixed blood had grown up in the West and naturally had its representatives in Southern Alberta. Although during the ranching age marriages with full-blooded Indian women were viewed with disapproval, and half-breeds were as much suspect as full-bloods, to a smaller admixture of native blood no stigma was attached.

(4) F.W. Godsal, "Memoirs" p. 9

(5) Kelly, pp. 291, 292.

sometimes Indian "wives" were dispensed of without much ceremony by their mates, who, with the full approval of Indian custom, sent them back to their tribes. Frequently the "squaw-men" married white women from whom they took considerable pains to conceal their former alliances. Occasionally their fiancees arrived a little previously, only to discover their predecessors still in possession, a circumstance which rarely had a happy result. Such mixed marriages belonged to the early days. The later settlers brought their own moral standards with them and Southern Alberta's ranchers during the pre-war years possessed much the same rules of conduct as the English middle and upper classes.

Public conscience was as strongly opposed to lapses of this order as it was to departure from the property code. In the Macleod Gazette (6) may be found editorial reference to the practice of the barbarous custom of the "Chivari" by which primitive communities almost universally express their disapproval of sexual irregularities. Public spirit did not, however, prevent the establishment and conduct of disorderly houses in most centres of

population. In spite of the law of prohibition which existed, almost every village had a small but flourishing "red-light" area.

Mannered society is variously supposed to have ended with the end of the eighteenth century, ^{with} the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832, ^{with} the fall of the Second Empire and ^{with} the outbreak of the Great War. If Southern Alberta was ever mannered it was mannered as were the later Victorians. The niceties of social intercourse were piously observed. Gentlemen arose to their feet when ladies entered and ladies sat up straight. Conversation was a fine but neglected art, between the sexes swaddled in delicacy and a little hampered by a fondness for monologue. As the tributes of their menfolk suggest, women remained "the sex." The relaxation which came to English society with the eighties and nineties was in Alberta filtered through the prejudices of an isolated community. The "Souls" could hardly harren in Macleod and Calgary lacked a Marlborough House. When the New Woman came to an Alberta ranch, she appeared a little fast in the eyes of a community which was late Victorian almost against its will. Ranch conditions had, of course, modified even convention and the women of the ranches were uncensured for actions

which her English cousin would have thought shocking and her English snub scandalous, but her freedom was more real than apparent. Perhaps the breezy West had tempered convention more than ranchers admit or perhaps this exhortation to better manners had a lasting effect: "There is a practice frequently indulged in here, we believe and hope, thoughtlessly, which, to say the least, is in very bad taste. To refer to noises and remarks should a lady and gentleman pass down a street together. Macleod has always been noted for the respect and courtesy shown to the ladies, and we trust that the boys are not going to let the town fall from grace by making a lady feel uncomfortable.... Far out west we should recognize the honour they have done us by casting their lot without the rules of civilisation, and to feel that they can safely go down street without fear of being audibly commented upon," (7).

Even if, as this passage suggests, the behaviour of the ranchers was not always immaculate, their vices were the vices of gentlemen, drinking and gambling. Women were a too-circumscribed field and the gilded professional beauties of the

(7) Macleod Gazette, August 24, 1883.

Colonial would have seemed incongruous in the western scene and would have made it unprofitable. The right to drink was however one of the chief issues of the day. Prohibition, introduced simultaneously with the Mounted Police for the benefit of the Indians, had a stormy career. The settlers felt they had a right to decide the question of abstinence for themselves. In the towns which were growing up in the North-West there was a strong temperance movement which regarded some form of liquor control as indispensable to progress but the ranchers were almost unanimously opposed. Various expedients were devised but even after the abolition of free sale by hotels, the liquor problem remained a burning issue. As so many regarded the existing regulations as manifestly unjust there was a general conspiracy to evade them which complicated the task of the police, themselves far from convinced of the divine inspiration of their mission of suppression.

Although there were frequent exceptions, the use of intoxicants was fairly general among the ranchers. Consistent excess was uncommon but if any offence against good conduct was frequent, it was drunkenness. Much of it was merely the outcome of high spirits and was probably no commoner in Alberta than it was

elsewhere in those hard-drinking days. Unfortunately for the good name of the Englishman, a small number of "remittance men", called English, but quite as probably Scotch, Irish or Welsh, came or were sent to the West and with grim determination, drank themselves to death. Their escapades enjoyed an undeserved prominence in the press and in popular gossip of the day, a prominence which rather gives the impression that Southern Alberta was largely populated by the drunken younger sons of English peers. Actually such abuse was rare. Although poverty sometimes made impossible the realization of their ideals, most of the ranchers shared the nineteenth-century belief that spirituous liquors, correctly used, had something to contribute to the good life.

Gambling, forbidden and permitted, was a feature of most gatherings in ranching days. Cards, racing, dice and plain betting kept money in circulation and formed an exciting interlude between periods of work. There were a number of professional gamblers in the country but amateurism prevailed. Poker, the typically Western game in the United States, was the most popular card-game but black-jack, the American

variety of vingt-et-un, had exponents. Sometimes large sums of money changed hands but gambling seems to have ruined fewer ranchers than the speculation of later days.

Local loyalties were strong. The employees of a ranch, whether English or German, were faithful to its interests regardless of their own. Even after they left its employment, they continued to take an interest in the well-being of the ranch at which they remained welcome. The ranchers of various districts were very loyal to the other members of their local stock association and sometimes there was almost open war between two districts when some disagreement arose between stock-owners. Local loyalty was the reflection of an intense nationalistic loyalty. During the Boer War a German family which settled in Sheep Creek near Okotoks was driven from the country by the petty persecutions to which they were subject as "pro-Boers". Before the war they had been extremely popular. The loyalty of the ranching community to the "Old Country" found expression in the Great War. The districts where ranching still predominated sent a larger percentage of their young men to France than almost any others.

in Alberta.

The code of the Alberta ranchers was a strange synthesis of those of Victorian England's upper classes and of those of the range country of the United States. Isolation made them conservative. In the period under consideration English influences prevailed. The first generation was English and ranching as a dominant industry did not last long enough to permit the second generation to assert itself. It would have been more Americanized but still English because its atmosphere was English. In a few communities which have survived with little change in their racial make-up the English—perhaps it would be fairer to say the "Old Country"—influence still prevails unchallenged but the environment has forced subtle adaptations. In such communities the body is American but the spirit is English. Although these isolated settlements are Canadian, they proudly preserve more of their English tradition than almost any other group of rural Canadian communities.

(6) Associations and Organisations

During the ranching era in Southern Alberta, although the population was small and scattered, associations and organizations flourished. Political, fraternal, cultural, social and business organizations were built up, had their day and either languished or were absorbed into the general fabric of provincial life. The very smallness of the population created a need for these organizations and associations, for without them few of the aims and ambitions of the community could be accomplished. The desire for rapid development, the Booster Complex, from which the ranchers were not entirely free, the desire for a fuller & social and cultural life, and the evident benefits of co-operation in the ranching industry itself, led men into combination.

The Stock Associations were the most important of all the organizations. As we have seen elsewhere, the Associations were very useful to the industry. They brought the ranchers into contact with each other, enabled them to organize their work to prevent wasteful duplication of effort, disseminated information and enabled the ranchers to combine for various useful purposes, ranging from the improvement

of the breed of range-stock to the placing of bounties on timber-wolves. They developed the corporate spirit of the ranchers and gave weight to their representations to Dominion and Territorial governments. Indeed, without the Associations, the industry would have suffered partial paralysis or even death.

Political organizations had their origin at the first elections. Politics was a lively game and the ranchers' interests were at stake. Instinctively Conservative, the rancher cynically believed that all governments alike were quite indifferent to his plight. His frequent victimization "to protect the credit of Canada" (8) suggests that his belief had foundation. Even as early as 1883, at the meeting for the organization of a stock-association, when it was proposed to place some matter before the North-West Council the reply was, "the Council never meets: there is no money in it." (9). In spite of this attitude of disrespect for the governing bodies, the ranchers, or some of them, occasionally took a hand in election fights. During the campaign of 1896, an enterprising group of amateur politicians and newspaper-men published "The Outlaw" at Scott's Coulee, near

(8) E.H. Maunsell "Memoirs" Part II page 6.

(9) Macleod Gazette, April 14, 1883.

Pincher Creek (10). The frank and vigorous personnelities of this organ would have done credit to professional journalists.

Southern Alberta had its intellects, or at least its intellectual interests. One of her scholars shot himself, perhaps unable to find consolation in either the volume of *Ilautus* or the bottle of whiskey which were found beside his bed. In Macleod, on December 14, 1884, a literary, Scientific and Historical Society was founded. It had ten charter members and others were to be elected by ballot. The first officers were the Reverend John Maclean, Captain Cotton, F.W.S. Haultain and J.D. Higinbotham. On December 22 the President, Dr. Maclean, delivered the inaugural address, which dealt with "Indian literature" (11). Such a society was a remarkable phenomenon in a pioneer community.

Nonaccount of ranchers' organizations would be complete without mention of their activities during the Rebellion of 1885. Although the Southern Alberta Indians remained loyal, tension was high. Harnessed teams waited day and night near each isolated ranch

(10) Mrs. C. Lynch-Staunton, "A History of Early Days in Pincher Creek", pp. 42-44.

(11) J.D. Higinbotham, "When the West was Young", p. 317 appendix.

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house to convey the women and children to the nearest police post at the first sign of trouble. Many of the men joined General Strange's little expeditionary force. The rest organized into patrols to keep watch. Perhaps the most famous was "Stimson's Rangers" formed by Fred Stimson, manager of the Bar U, which travelled south of High River. Although no outbreak occurred, and the "Rangers" were deprived of opportunity for heroism, their organization illustrates the remarkable power which a very small and scattered group of men possessed, of co-operation in the face of common danger.

Fraternal organizations duly appeared. By 1894 five lodges were advertising in the Macleod Gazette, a medley of initials and symbols. They were the I.O.O.F., I.O.M., A.C.U.W., I.O.I. and the A.P.A.M. The "Joiners" had arrived. In so obviously gregarious a community, it would have been strange if a good many other social clubs had not existed. All through the ranching areas, but especially where settlement was well-established, as at High River, Calgary and Macleod, cricket, polo and race clubs flourished. Some clubs were more purely social in intention and with the athletic clubs they formed convenient centres for the life of the neighborhood and performed a successful function in the clear articulation of society.

(7) Habits and Pastimes

People's pastimes reveal their group personality even more frankly than their various occupations. The ranchers held their leisure hour, and filled it with the engagements which they had enjoyed at home. Cricket, polo, tennis and horse-racing played as large a part in the new life as in the old. There were new sports, by-products of the new business, which they found diverting, at first as spectators and later, in the next generation, as performers. The sports which professionals perform at assemblies will reduce to-day had in the ranching era a real utility. In England the squirearchy was committing "slow, gentlemanly, unintelligent hari-kari before its trinity of the fox, the horse and the pheasant" (12). Fox and pheasant found adequate and less expensive substitutes; horses were plentiful and cost little to keep in the new country. Even quite poor people could now indulge the tastes of gentlemen.

There is a tradition that polo was played for the first time in America, near Lincher Creek in 1886 (13), when a rancher brought the first set

(12) Bott, Alan, "Our Fathers" p. 6.

(13) History of Early days at Lincher Creek, compiled by Miss C. Lynch-Staunton, p. 36.

stick and ball from Thailand. If the game had only been introduced into England fifteen years before, the claim may be justified. In the years following its initiation, polo enjoyed great popularity.

Stigmatized elsewhere as a rich man's game, it could be played by Alberta ranchers with a minimum of expense. Clubs were formed in almost every ranching centre. There were several teams near Lacombe Creek and Macleod and at High River, Millerville, Okotoks and Cochrane. Tournaments were arranged and cups were donated. The Beaver Creek trophy, over which many hard-played games were fought, was an ordinary tin mug mounted on miniature polo sticks carved by members of the club (14). The polo matches and the tournaments were great occasions; the former of course attracted fewer spectators than the latter, to which came crowds from every district. Polo was a very social game and the onlookers were almost as important as the players. The standard of play was high and Alberta produced some world-famous players, notably Major George Ross of High River. Polo continued in favour in Alberta until the war when it languished for want of players. Afterwards it recovered and

(14) *Ibid.*, p. 10.

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teams appeared in unlikely places. Depression struck it a bitter blow but it survives, although its chief support comes no longer from the ranches but from the cities.

Horse-racing was another popular diversion. Informal races between the favourites of two or three proud owners were very frequent and race clubs were organized early in the period and held frequent meets. Horse-races formed an inevitable part of the sports days which were held to celebrate national holidays and other ~~such~~ great occasions. Many horse-lovers imported and bred racing-stock and, although by the nineties there were already protests that the sporting spirit of the West was declining, very good races were run on Alberta tracks. Every village and town had a track of some sort, and there were many tracks where there were no towns. Racing was in the early years an almost exclusively amateur affair, with owners, jockeys and trainers who lived in the neighborhood. Racing was "straight" in those days, thanks to the British tradition.

Everyone in the country who could, attended the meets, driving or riding for miles. Sometimes they stayed with friends in the vicinity; sometimes

in their enthusiasm they camped. Everyone met everyone else, for the race-meetings were like large family parties. Sometimes the meets were one-day affairs, often they lasted longer. Almost invariably the Race Club held a Ball which everyone attended. Until the War the character of the "races" changed little, but most of the Clubs disappeared then. There are very few rural race-meetings to-day, but the one or two which survive have lost little of the atmosphere which characterized their predecessors of thirty, forty, even fifty years ago.

In spite of their predilection for the horse-sports, the ranchers had time for other diversions. Cricket and the Mounted Police appeared simultaneously on the Western plains. When the ranchers came they organized with zest. Cricket Clubs flourished everywhere and matches were regular features at Sports Days and other gatherings. Lawn tennis was a popular game with both men and women and showed the same notable tendency to tournaments. Many of the ranches had courts and the gentle sport was everywhere enjoyed.

Obviously the ranchers' games reflected very

faithfully the English scene. Enthusiastic sportsmen, with excellent athletes among them, the ranchers played at everything, whether at the games they had imported themselves, or at the new games which cowboys from the old ranges introduced. Perhaps no pioneer community ever devoted quite so much time to amusement. The ranchers had both leisure and an exemplary training in its use.

Tournaments and race-meetings alike usually ended with a Ball and dancing was always a favourite amusement, even in Mounted Police days. "....a new social life was unfolding in the land. Band practice was held daily at Fort Walsh and Fort Macleod and for what was a band if one did not dance ? Dancing raged. During January and February 1880, at Fort Walsh, thirteen police dances were held....either the half-breed women were exceptionally interesting or....girls had followed Mrs. Macleod and Mrs. Winder and Mrs. Shurtleff in some profusion" (15). After settlement began the Police posts remained the centres of social life and their Balls were the great events of the social calendar (16). As settlers came in

(15) Longstreth, T. Morris, "The Silent Force" p. 115
 (16) Macleod Gazette, July 15, 1882; December 14, 1882; January 13, 1883.

they too entertained on a scale commensurate with the size of their houses. Their clubs and organizations all gave Balls as well. In 1882 at Macleod "there were one or two dances every night during Christmas week," which was the high point of the year's gaiety.

The evidence suggests that the ranchers were well amused. Most of the dances of the seventies and early eighties were quite informal, held wherever a floor was available and with whatever music could be improvised. The dance-figures themselves were those of the England of the seventies, with a few American jigs and reels introduced for variety. As the years advanced newcomers brought the latest innovations and the informality of the pioneers was modified. Balls during the late eighties and after were modelled after similar functions in England. Evening dress became the rule, the ladies strove after more elaborate toilettes and the music, the decorations and the refreshments--these latter somewhat complicated by the liquor laws--were matters of consequence to be considered by Committees. People still came miles to attend the dances, staying with friends or at hotels. Those days of leisured transport were the hey-day of the small town hotel, since in

the later years the centre of social life had in large measure moved to the towns.

Cards and theatricals were other indoor diversions only less popular than dancing. Poker was the men's game; few ladies played it, although other card games were approved. Whist had its day and by the nineteen-hundreds auction bridge was becoming popular. Longstreth records what must have been one of the first theatrical productions in Alberta, a performance by the Mounted Police in 1880 (17). "....The men, instead of a society drama....presented 'Dick Turpin' as their first play, although the actors had just come in from making the arrest of Four Jack Bob for assaulting an Indian." Men and women shared both indoor and outdoor games—women shot, rode, fished and played tennis with vigour and skill. So much progress had the New Woman made in Alberta. All kinds of expeditions were popular, picnics as well as longer camping expeditions such as that Craig described at the end of his book "Ranching with Lords and Commons"

The ranchers enjoyed themselves. Life was easy

(17) Longstreth, T. Morris, "The Silent Force" p. 117.

enough to allow plentiful leisure and they used it pleasantly without the conscientious scruples which might have troubled those who had known a harder pioneering. Every occasion was seized for entertainment and the ranchers foregathered upon the slightest excuse. Sometimes work was neglected for a more attractive diversion, but very rarely; haying meant staying at home and gaiety ran highest when work was slack. It would be unfair to call the ranchers a lazy people, equally unfair to stigmatize them as over-industrious. They were not always financially successful; but they did introduce into Alberta a tradition of leisure, a more graceful mode of living, in welcome contrast to the glorification of labour as an end in itself which has been so characteristic of the Canadian and American way of life.

(c) The Ranch in the Community

(1) The Ranch and the Church

In a pioneer community the provision of social services is always an important problem and the church is usually one of the first to emerge. When two or three are gathered together the natural outcome, if it be Sunday, is a church service. In the ranching life church services played a large part. Although at rural points services were infrequent, they brought a general turn-out of the faithful and the social contact involved was as much anticipated as the spiritual food.

Among the first religious services held in Southern Alberta were those of the Methodist McDougalls, that intrepid missionary family who established themselves at Morleyville on the Bow. The McDougalls were primarily interested in the Indians and although they held services for the scattered white population of the country, their interests lay as far outside the white community as their station lay outside the true range area.

It seems unlikely that the practice of religion arose spontaneously among the early traders at Whoop Up, Stand Off and Slide Out, although the Rev. George McDougall did hold services which were well

received. The Mounted Police in the seventies enjoyed such ministrations as their officers could contrive. At the beginning of the next decade the missionaries began to arrive in greater numbers. The denominations first in the field were the ~~Methodists~~, ^{Methodists}, the Roman Catholics, the ~~Anglicans~~ ^{Anglicans} and the ~~Presbyterians~~ ^{Presbyterians} ~~Methodists~~. Sent out to work among the Indians, the efforts of the missionaries among the white settlers were at first merely subsidiary, but as population increased, such work obtained more attention both from the clergy in the field and the missionary organizations which sustained them.

Fort Macleod was the first point in Southern Alberta to attain anything like regular services. In the early numbers of the "Gazette", which began publication on July 1, 1882, there is frequent mention of the religious bodies. Apparently the Methodist Church was well-established for the issue of September 14 contains a puff for the community's first literary production, a series of allegorical essays, "Lone Land Lights", by Rev. John Maclean, the Methodist minister. The Church of England was apparently early in the field for by 1883 its services were regularly held in the Police Barracks and there are editorial exhortations to liberality in contributing

to the erection of an Anglican Church. The first Roman Catholic services mentioned were in April 1883, conducted morning and evening "at Munroe's house" by Father Lacombe. At the meeting which followed it was decided to erect a chapel.

Services were gradually extended to every spot where a congregation and a clergyman could coincide. Notice was given in the Gazette of April 1883 that Church of England services would be held at Captain Scobie's house at Pincher Creek on the last Sunday of each month. Captain Scobie was a good churchman, for when St. John's Church was built at Pincher Creek in 1884, the first Anglican Church in Southern Alberta, he gave the site. At Calgary the first Anglican service was held in 1884 in the Police Barracks and was conducted by the Rev. J.W. Tims. The organ was loaned by a neighboring saloon and taken to church on a wheel-barrow. The Anglican congregation at Calgary, the Church of the Redeemer, now a Pro-Cathedral, shared its priest with the temporarily larger congregation of St. Paul's, Fish Creek, (Midnapore) a church which disputes the claim of St. John's, Pincher Creek, to be the oldest Anglican Church in Alberta.

We seem to be rather preoccupied with the Church

of England. It was indeed the church of the ranching community. Not all the ranchers were Anglican, for many of them were Roman-Catholics or ^{members of other} ~~denominations~~. ^{denominations} ^A Protestants ^A A majority of the ranchers were, however, Anglican, and among those who were not, sectarian enthusiasm was not a fetish. One church seemed much like another, and if the Anglicans organized they usually received support from other denominations. Until 1900 the chief support of the other churches came from the towns; after 1900 ^{other} ^A Protestant denominations led in the farming districts, although in ranching communities like Millarville and Pekisko, the Anglicans retained their majority.

Sometimes the ranchers went to church at the nearest town, but if the town was remote service was held at some convenient centre. The centre could be a school or a hall—many of the ranching districts had some centre of this sort—or it might be a house with a large sitting-room. Services were held whenever the clergyman could be present. In later years the country churches had afternoon or morning services and the town churches who shared the priest had early morning and evening services. If funds permitted, which they often did not, a

church was built. The existence of a parish was precarious, depending as a rule upon a faithful family or two, who provided the house, the music (if there was any), put up the parson (if he was a visitor) and gave the congregation tea.

This last duty was vital. Church was almost as important from the social point of view as the race-meeting or polo-match to which it sometimes deferred. Everyone met at church, discussed future plans, issued and received invitations, and exchanged news. For many districts church services were a useful social cement. Race meets were occasions, polo and cricket had their season, but the church was always there, offering a welcome opportunity to combine duty and pleasure.

The ranchers' church was a pioneer organization. It lacked buildings, clergy, money, organization. Its few clergymen were, if they were conscientious, terribly overworked. Organization was almost impossible outside the towns. Nevertheless the church went on, haphazard and incoherent but filling a genuinely important place in its people's lives and affections.

(2) The Ranch and the Schools

Many of the ranchers had in their original homes belonged to the educated classes. The rest of the ranchers and most of the stock-hands were wise in their own craft but possessed only the most rudimentary formal education. Many of them had a supreme contempt for what they are believed to have called "book learning". With the first-mentioned class education had become a habit, and there were certain regulations as to education in the North-West Territories which were applicable to Southern Alberta, but although intellectual curiosity existed, few pioneer communities have been as devoid of enthusiasm for the building of schools. There was a mild and conscientious agitation in the press, attributable to the Scotch of the towns, but in the range-country, silence.

The ranchers, faithful to the English tradition, were inclined to believe that education was the affair of the children's parents. Where a school was available, as in Calgary, Macleod and Pincher Creek from very early days, the ranchers in the vicinity sent their children there and even sent them to live with friends in the town when distance or

weather conditions forbade riding or driving. This was not a universal rule. The children of the wealthier ranchers ^{or of the ranchers} who had wealthier relatives went "Home" to school, to Eastern Canada, to the United States, to Great Britain, or even to the Continent. Sometimes they were sent because of the advantages these countries seemed to offer and very often because sentiment dictated their attendance at the schools of their parents. Sometimes mothers taught their children at home; occasionally fathers lent a hand. In the spate of female relatives governesses were common. Tutors were rare.

The large area of the ranches militated against the establishment of school-districts but as settlement increased schools appeared at various points and the ranchers' children attended. Sometimes ranch families wintered in town to give their children an opportunity to go to school. Local private boarding schools, which solved the educational problems of many parents, did not appear in Calgary until the first decade of the twentieth century when Western Canada College for boys and St. Hilda's School for girls were established.

The education of the ranchers' children was a curious mixture—a year or so at home, with or without

a governess, then a country school and a taste of boarding-out to attend a town or village school; in many cases a year or two in the East or in England, either at school or being "finished" by contacts with relatives. In spite of its peculiarities the system, or rather arrangement, was not wholly bad. Some children did grow up completely illiterate but they were few. Schooling was rudimentary but after the railway books were plentiful in many homes and the homes did maintain certain standards of culture and refinement. It was an informal training, one which left great blanks of complete ignorance, but perhaps not to be wholly condemned in favour of the complete and stultifying formalism of a standardized educational system.

(3) The Ranch and Intellectual Life--the Press

Some of the ranchers had intellectual interests. They were men with good minds, good educations and good memories, who brought a few books with them and had more sent out. Many of them, moulded by the educational system peculiar to the British upper and middle classes, were excellent classical scholars who found in their new life a new appreciation of classical wisdom and wit. Not all the ranchers were classical scholars; the majority had probably shed their hardly-acquired knowledge of Greek roots before they saw the foothills of the Rockies. For those who had the inclination, the new environment was favourable to scholastic indulgence, for the ranches offered ample leisure, sufficient solitude and a disposition to accept the right of others to gratify their peculiar tastes. As long as his cattle were reasonably well cared for, the intellectual rancher who preferred converse with Catullus to discourse upon cows was regarded as odd rather than offensive. Literary enthusiasm was usually genuine; as a pose it would have been ridiculous in a country where, since most people were preoccupied with cattle, there was more honour

to the stock-man than to the scholar.

The ranchers who were inclined towards things of the mind were appreciative rather than creative, and their literary output was negligible both in quantity and quality. A few jingles in the local papers and an occasional travel-book or novel comprise almost the entire production of the period. There was nothing of real literary value but much that is interesting to any collector of Canadiana. These writings reveal however that in Southern Alberta there had settled a very odd pioneer ^{for Western Canada} ~~community,~~ ^{There had} for few pioneers ~~have~~ the time or the inclination to read books, let alone write them.

In the first column of the first issue of the Fort Macleod Gazette, published on July 1, 1882, there appeared above the initials R.O.F. what must have been Southern Alberta's first published poem, "A Valentine". It was hardly a poem, little more indeed than three eight-line verses of doggerel. Its subject rather than its technique is its claim to interest. It is an attempt to satirize the aesthetic tendencies peculiar to the last decades of the nineteenth century in England, and especially their most famous representative, Oscar Wilde.

True, the "fin-de-siècle" school received rough treatment, but that such a composition should appear in the first number of a pioneer paper in a pioneer country is surprising. The literary interests of the Gazette were not limited to verse, for in the same issue there was a very caustic article on "Boy's Western Stories". The Gazette was destined to become more Philistine in its tone for in the issue of June 23, 1883 we read, "We received a contribution of poetry for insertion in the 'Gazette'. No doubt the poem had merit, but then we don't know much about poetry, and so did not want to take the chances of getting mobbed. We shall always be glad to receive contributions which will be of interest to our readers, but at poetry, unless above the average, we must draw the line. We need all our space for more important matters."

Apparently the Press was adamantly low-brow. In the meantime, however, the Gazette, as has been remarked, had given a 'puff' to Rev. James Maclean's "Lone Land Lights", that book of allegorical essays with a double motive, to further the cause of religion and to raise funds for the Mission. The price, neatly bound, was fifty cents. In 1886 Alexander Stavely Hill, not really a rancher, but an English M.P. who was part

owner of the Oxley Ranch, had published "From Home to Home", descriptive of his Canadian travels and experiences, especially in the ranching West. The sometime manager of the Oxley Ranch, John R. Craig, also wrote a book, published in 1903. "Ranching with Lords and Commons" is a rather one-sided account of the experiences of the Canadian ranch-manager for an English ranching company. General Strange, the moving spirit in the Military Colonization Company's ranch on the Bow below Calgary (near ~~Gleichen~~) wrote a diverting semi-autobiographical novel "Gunner Jingo's Jubilee" in which he recounts his Canadian adventures. Members of the Mounted Police as well made occasional literary excursions. There was even a poetess of the ranches, Mrs. Walter Skrine of High River who, under the pseudonym of Moira O'Neile wrote a good deal of verse dealing with the North-West, some of which is to be found in "Songs of the Glens of Antrim" (Blackwood and Sons). Her verse was certainly not of a distinguished greatness, but she must have caught a measure of the spirit of the days, for there are frequent affectionate references to her poetry in the reminiscences of pioneer ranchers.

In none of the arts did any of the ranchers rise

above the level of mediocrity. They were amateurs in execution as well as in spirit. None of the innumerable water-colours, oils and sketches, which the women of the ranches, like their English sisters, delighted in making ever equalled the works in which C.W. Russell depicted so vitally the life of the American range. Painting, like writing, was for the ranchers a pleasant hobby, very suitable to men and women of taste and refinement but not for a moment to be taken seriously. The artist would have been a little out of place in the ranchers' scheme of things, a little unreal, a little unrestrained. Their culture was the prerogative of their class, inseparable from it and essential to it. It did not make for great artistic achievement but it did make for a very agreeable and balanced way of life.

One of the earliest manifestations of community life in Alberta was the emergence of a local press. The first paper which served the ranching community in Southern Alberta was the Fort Macleod Gazette, which began publication on July 1, 1882. It was followed closely by the Calgary Herald whose first issue came off the press on August 31, 1883. The Medicine Hat Times followed in 1884 and the Lethbridge News in 1885. These were the pioneer newspapers of

Southern Alberta; others were born, but had short and stormy existences; these four survived, in one form or another, ~~with~~ frequent changes of name, staff and policy.

Of these four the Macleod Gazette was most definitely the organ of a ranching community. While Calgary, Medicine Hat and Lethbridge had other interests, Macleod was entirely dependant for its importance upon its position as a distributing centre for the adjacent ranching areas. Its early prestige and growth had been the result of its position as Mounted Police headquarters but the Police had little need of a newspaper and it was the ranchers who made a local press possible.

The first issue of the Gazette was the work of C.E.D. Wood and E.T. Saunders, ex-mounted Policemen. It was to be issued semi-monthly and its subscription rate was three dollars a year, payable in advance. It was a four-page paper, four columns to the page, and the columns were $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches long. In addition to the poem and article previously mentioned, a good deal of information was offered. The leading article dealt with Fort Macleod's need for a paper, the policy it would pursue of independant support of the North-

test to correct the erroneous impressions of travellers and its desire to form a link between the two greatest countries in the world," presumably Canada and the United States. Another editorial complained of the type of men sent out by the government to the Indian Reserves. Civic pride was a strong point with the Gazette. "Stir up, gentlemen, let us put our main street into something like respectable shape. Cart away a few old dead cats and dogs who have been laid out in state long enough, also the old cans and rubbish, and fill up a few holes. The cost will be trifling if all throw in the mite."

The news consisted chiefly of local happenings, an Indian attempt at horse-stealing, the arrest of Indians for the same offence, the arrival of the mail from Benton on time, indications of a certain friction between police and people, a drowning at Pincher Creek. There was an account of the Pincher Creek roundup, the first to be regularly organized. Two advertisements appeared, one of I.C. Baker and Co., Ft. Macleod and Calgary, General Merchants, and the other of the "Fort Macleod Hotel and Billiard Room. Old Famoose, Pron't." A great many personal witticisms of impenetrable meaning and a number of exchanges made up the balance. The

exchanges were chiefly American and largely pre-occupied with everyday life although there were echoes of Royal marriages and the Tichbourne Case.

The Gazette grew and altered with the country but in essentials remained the same. The Gazette was the ranchers' paper and the town where it was published was a ranch town. Nevertheless it was ^a town, ~~and~~ the towns stood for progress, people, and therefore for farming. The lease holders received rough treatment in the Gazette's columns and the grievances of the squatters ^{were} ~~XXXX~~ given ~~its~~ full publicity.

Journalism in Southern Alberta had a virility and independence in those early years which would be refreshing, if a little shocking, to-day. Libel suits and the gaoling of editors for contempt of court were merely part of the game. The voice of the booster was loud in the columns of the Gazette, louder still in some of the other papers, but it was an age when self-depreciation was unfashionable in new countries. They had enough prejudices to overcome before they could win the passionately desired immigrants. The Southern Alberta press depended temporarily on the ranchers' subscriptions and advertisements; it served their purposes and took up their grievances but it

waited with ill-concealed impatience for the flood of immigration which in its ever-reant progress. The rancher subscribed, tongue in cheek, remembering "The Morning Post".

(1) The Ranch and the Town

Southern Alberta towns had diverse origins. Some, like Calgary and Macleod, were police posts. Some, like Medicine Hat, were born with the railway; and some, like Okotoks and High River, were convenient stopping-places on the long road from Calgary to Macleod. Cochrane grew up around the Cochrane ranch, and Lethbridge around its mines. All the older towns, which had their beginnings before the farming boom of the first decade of the twentieth century, drew sustenance from the ranching industry. Some, like Macleod, were wholly ranch towns, centres of distribution for their neighborhood. Others were railway towns, still others mining towns, but to all of them ranching meant at least a portion of their daily bread. Yet the towns, which depended on the ranches, helped to destroy them. Their whole influence was thrown on the side of rapid development, rapid development which meant farms and fences in place of ranches and the open range. The continuance of Southern Alberta as a primarily ranching country meant slow, if solid, development; stagnation, the towns called it. They wanted instead, floods of settlers, new buildings, high prices—they wanted

booms. Their booms came and went, ranching declined, and after a spasm of growth the small towns of Alberta sank back into sleepy placidity.

Perhaps in this lay the root of the antagonism which developed between the towns and the country districts which they served. An English observer in Canada in the decade before the war (18), was strongly impressed by the cleavage, which seemed to her one of the dominant characteristics of Western life. The feud persists, obvious to anyone who has heard the town-dweller's bland assumption of his own superiority, and the frank scorn of the country man for his urban brother.

Curiously enough ranchers were disposed to be more tolerant of some towns than of others. High River for example, was not so much disliked, but Okotoks, thirteen miles distant, was a "damned Methodist hole." The foundation of such prejudices are hard to determine. Perhaps the ranchers still clung to the prejudice against "trades" current in the English society of their day. Perhaps they really did imagine some essential difference between their own lives and that of the shop-keepers in the nearest village. The explanation of the comparative

popularity of towns like High River, Pincher Creek and Macleod probably lay in the considerable number of settlers there who shared the outlook of the ranchers. Many of them, indeed, as the years passed, were retired ranchers. Calgary, which soon superseded Macleod as the capital of ranchdom, was large enough, comparatively so at any rate, to be in a distinct and separate class.

In spite of the antagonism, the towns were vitally important to the ranch life. In those horse-drawn days, the country towns were far more important in relation to their rural neighborhood than they are today when the city has drawn nearer. The shops in the towns were the nearest available sources of supply for the necessities of life. The all-important mail had to be obtained there. As the towns grew their hotels and assembly-rooms offered superior facilities for the social functions in which the coule of the ranchers delighted. There was of course a good deal of social intercourse between town and country, inevitable while men outnumbered women. Nevertheless, when the country clowns gave a dance in the town's ball-room only a very select few of the townspeople were favoured with invitations. That remarkable institution "the county" was well on its way to

establishment on democratic Alberta soil.

Calgary, once it had triumphed over Macleod, was, of course, the focal point of the ranching community's life. Its economic position was natural, it was ideally suited to serve as a distributing centre for the whole ranching area. Its social position was an inevitable consequence. Perhaps Calgary was relatively more important then than it will ever be again. It was however, unsatisfied, and added its noise to the chorus of the towns, demanding people and more people. The voice of the towns was the voice of the press. Herald, Gazette, News and Times clamoured together for immigration. The destruction of the old order was the triumph of the towns over their old antagonists upon whose needs their own power had been built. //

VII--THE FUTURE OF THE RANCHING TRADITION.

In retrospect the ranching period seems a Golden Age. In its economic aspect ranching in Southern Alberta was a temporary adjustment of agricultural enterprise to the needs of a new country. As a dominant industry it has been destroyed; perhaps, present conditions suggest, hostile and unwisely but nevertheless irrevocably. It will never again be more than a convenient method for the utilization of otherwise useless lands. In its social aspect it may have a longer life. It was, from this point of view, a not unsuccessful attempt to synthesize the customs and prejudices of Victorian England and those of the new West. The ranchers nourished a tradition of simple and gracious living which even the War, which destroyed many of the concrete realities of their period, was unable to eradicate. Here and there it still lingers on the ranches and farms and in the cities and towns of Southern Alberta. In the past decade it seemed to decline but the last few years have seen a rebirth of its spirit. Such a tradition, if it has vitality, should have its place in Western Canada. A renaissance of the ranching industry itself seems improbable but we may at least

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hone for the continued life of its spirit. 172

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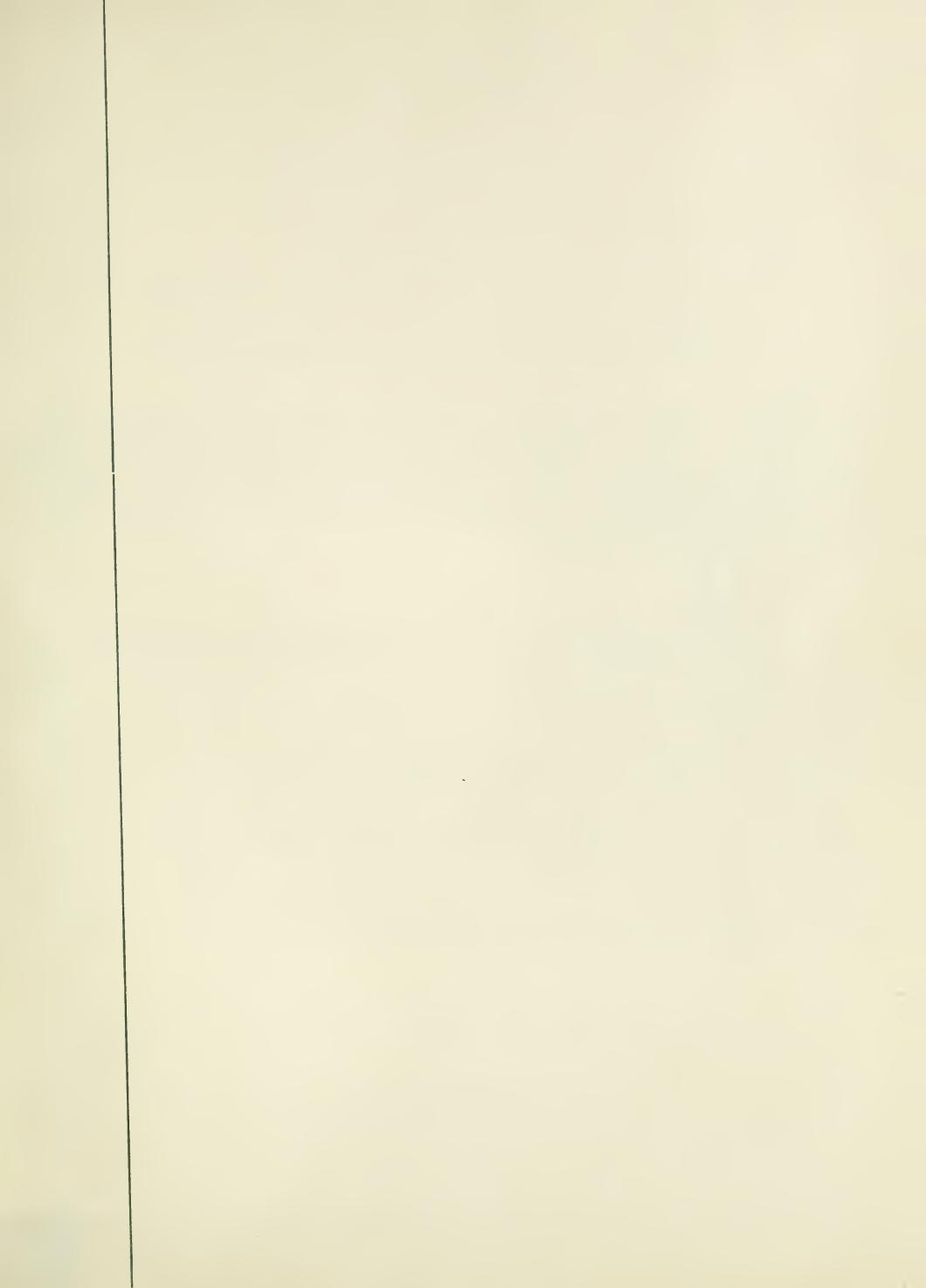
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